Title
#Ni Una Menos: Policy Approaches to Gender-Based Violence in Central America

Author
Kinzerska-Martinez, Luiza

Publication Date
2020

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

#Ni Una Menos:
Policy Approaches to Gender-Based Violence
in Central America

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in Latin American Studies

by

Luiza Kinzerska-Martinez

2020

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

#Ni Una Menos:

Policy Approaches to Gender-Based Violence

in Central America

by

Luiza Kinzerska-Martinez

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Teresa Cecilia Menjivar, Chair

The legacies of twentieth-century state violence in Central America continue to prosper in the region's political, cultural, economic, and social life. Today, high levels of gender-based violence and feminicide in Central American countries, especially in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, can be traced, in part, to the historic effects of state violence. As a result, in recent decades, these countries have passed national laws to prevent, sanction, and eradicate gender-based violence. Despite legislative initiatives taken by governments, high levels of impunity in the legislative and judicial systems, hierarchical structures of gender, class, and race, heteropatriarchal national values, and corruption have obstructed progress toward a society where women can lead lives free of violence. Using the violence triangle and multisided violence theoretical frameworks, this work explores the multifaceted nature of violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras,

focusing on structural, cultural/symbolic, direct, state, everyday, political, gender/gendered, and legal violence. Drawing from eight in-depth, semi-structured interviews and public discourse analysis, this study ultimately investigates how these different forms of violence coalesce and affect the implementation and enforcement of laws on gender-based violence that are on the books in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

The thesis of Luiza Kinzerska-Martinez is approved.

Bonnie Taub

Katherine M. Marino

Teresa Cecilia Menjivar, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

DEDICATION

To all women everywhere who have faced or
continue to face any violence in their lifetime

and

To my parents, Lena and Luis, for their
unconditional love and support
throughout this journey and always

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF APPENDICES

Tables

Images*

* All photographs taken by the author

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many individuals, institutions, and organizations I thank for their support in the course of this project. Without their contributions, either direct or indirect, this study would not have been possible. First and foremost, I thank my thesis committee members: Katherine Marino, Cecilia Menjívar, and Bonnie Taub. I am incredibly grateful to have met and worked with you in my time at UCLA. Thank you, Professor Marino, for nurturing my interest in gender research very early on in my graduate career, engaging in critical thinking discussions and working so closely with me on the literature review portion of this research, and always encouraging me to make the most out of this thesis. Thank you, Professor Menjívar, for your tireless mentorship, which included guiding me through the research process, taking me under your wing as your research assistant, supporting my studies, and sharing your expertise with me. Thank you, Professor Taub, for your relentless support of the students in the Latin American Studies M.A. program. I am, and always will be, grateful for your efforts to make my dream of becoming a student at UCLA a reality. Lastly, thank you all for your thoughtful and constructive feedback on this work. It was an honor and a pleasure to learn from you.

I also thank the UCLA Graduate Division for sponsoring my academic studies through the Graduate Opportunity Fellowship. I feel very honored to have been selected as a 2018-2019 fellow. Thank you to the UCLA Latin American Studies department for funding my research abroad with the Monica Salinas Summer Research Fellowship and for supporting my studies through the Sandra Mabritto Memorial Fellowship. In the UCLA International Institute, I thank Magda Yamamoto for always finding and proposing a solution whenever I faced any administrative setbacks or issues. For their priceless advice and feedback in the early stages of this project, I also thank Professors Patricia Arroyo Calderón from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese,

Shannon Speed from American Indian Studies, and Lorena Fuentes from International Development Studies.

Importantly, I wish to thank all of the individuals that made the research process abroad rewarding and memorable. Thank you to the human rights and women's organizations that appear in this work: Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres, Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER, CEFEMINA, Fundación Sobrevivientes, FLACSO-Guatemala, OSAR, Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres, and CODEFEM. More specifically, thank you to Adriana, Elena, Teresa, Isabel, Adela, María, Gloria, Marta, and Paula—the women within these organizations who took the time to share their wisdom with me. You all received me so warmly, and it was truly a pleasure speaking with all of you. Thank you to the employees I interacted with at the Costa Rican National Archives, INAMU, CIEM, and Costa Rican and Guatemalan National Libraries, who kindly showed me how to navigate through thousands of resources and made the archival research process dynamic and fun. These acknowledgments would not be complete without a big thank you to Selena, from the University of Costa Rica, for receiving me in San José with open arms.

I also thank Professors Mihoko Suzuki, Rachel Varra, Roger E. Kanet, Ambler H. Moss, Jr., and Frank H. Stringfellow, Jr., from the University of Miami—my undergraduate institution. Thank you for your mentorship and for supporting my desire to earn a graduate degree, which, in the long run, opened a gateway for me to engage in this research. Last, but most definitely not least, I thank my parents, Lena and Luis, for their unconditional love every step of the way. Thank you for being an unshakable support system, for always believing in me, and for the sacrifices you made so that I could have opportunities that you could not. Thank you for instilling in me a love for my Central American heritage, which ultimately motivated me to focus my study on several countries in this beautiful and diverse isthmus. This is for both of you.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the early morning hours of August 13, 2005, police found the lifeless body of Claudina Isabel Velásquez Paiz, a 19-year-old law student, on the street in Zone 11 of Guatemala City. The night of her death, between midnight and two in the morning, Velásquez Paiz had been walking home from a party and speaking on the phone with her boyfriend's mother, Zully Moreno. When their phone call was suddenly cut short by Velásquez Paiz's cries for help, Moreno rushed to Claudina's home to inform her family. After Claudina's parents searched for their daughter in every neighborhood en route from the party to their home, they tried to file a missing person report at about three in the morning. In response, police officers claimed they could not file one until she had been missing for at least twenty-four hours. Just a few hours later, police found Claudina's bruised body with a gunshot wound to the head. The first officers on the scene classified Velásquez Paiz as a gang member or sex worker because she wore a navel piercing and sandals. (Sanford, 2008, p. 114) In the eyes of the police, this made the case unworthy of further investigation.

Guatemala has notoriously low crime investigation and prosecution rates: in 2005, only 8 out of 5,338 homicides were successfully prosecuted. (Sanford, 2008, p. 117) Claudina's parents, however, adamantly sought justice for their daughter's death. Because of their insistence, Velásquez Paiz's murder made national headlines as one of the few cases of feminicide under investigation. The case, however, was marked by several fatal flaws, including the police's failure to promptly open an investigation, preserve and collect evidence from the crime scene, perform adequate forensic tests and analyses, and interview witnesses. (WOLA, 2006) Prosecutors and investigators assigned to the case were also frequently rotated, and joint meetings were never arranged to discuss continuity strategies. (Sanford, 2008, p. 117) As the fifteenth anniversary of

her death approaches, Claudina's case remains unsolved in the Guatemalan courts and her perpetrator(s) have yet to be identified.

Claudina's story is not an anomaly in Guatemala; hundreds of women and their families face similar fates every year. In fact, throughout Central America, women have been systematically murdered at increasingly alarming rates in the past three decades. Between 1995 and 2004, homicides of men increased by 68%, while those of women grew by 144%. (Carcedo, 2010, p. 40–42) From 2002 to 2008, more than 2,700 women were raped, mutilated, and murdered in Guatemala; of all these cases, only sixteen made it to trial. (Velasco, 2008, p. 398) Women in neighboring El Salvador and Honduras also face some of the highest rates of female homicide in the world. From 2002 to August 2018, 6,111 female homicides were recorded in Honduras (Foro de Mujeres por la Vida, 2018), while in El Salvador there were 7,076 registered cases. (ORMUSA, 2019) To situate these figures within a global context, from 2007 to 2012, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala ranked first, second, and fourth, respectively, in highest female homicide rates in the world. El Salvador registered 14.4 homicides per 100,000 women, Honduras 10.9, and Guatemala 9.8. (Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, 2015, p. 94)

Research Question

In response to growing threats of violence against women in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, feminist and human rights groups in these countries have pushed for national legislation to prevent, sanction, and eradicate discrimination and violence against women. Out of an interest to learn more about these policies, I initially posed the following research question: How are government policies in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras attempting to alleviate rampant gender-based violence in the twenty-first century? To what extent have these attempts been successful? Following a survey of the literature, I found that most policy analysts have already

deemed these laws "unsuccessful" and was instead drawn to the way in which scholars (Hume, 2008; Carey and Torres, 2010; Musalo and Bookey, 2014; Walsh and Menjívar, 2016a, 2016b; Menjívar and Walsh, 2017) discuss structural, symbolic, and political barriers to policy implementation in these countries. My research further led me in this direction, as these themes also emerged in the data I collected. As I drew all of these observations into my study, my final research question cohered around these ideas: Numerous laws on gender-based discrimination and violence are on the books in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, such as the Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women (2008), Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (2011), and Law of Equal Opportunities for Women (2000), respectively. Despite these laws, rates of gender-based violence—particularly female homicides, sexual violence, and intrafamily violence—remain exceptionally high in all three countries. (See Appendices, Tables 1-4) Therefore, it seems laws are necessary, but not sufficient, to combat gender-based violence. What factors may be affecting the proper implementation and enforcement of these laws in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras?[1]

This work begins with an overview of national laws that address violence against women in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. I then define terms such as "gender-based violence" and "violence against women," and briefly dive into important historical background from each of the countries. I follow this with a survey of the academic literature on gender-based violence and then discuss the methodological tools that undergird this research: public discourse analysis and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with representatives from women's and human rights

[1] I refrain from using the term "Northern Triangle" to refer to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras in this work due to its ties with neoliberal trade treaties and its derogatory use in international discourse, through which the term has become virtually synonymous with violence. (Chavez and Avalos, 2014; Schmidt and Buechler, 2017, p. 155)

organizations. Afterwards, I analyze the themes that emerged in the data I collected, such as the normalization of crimes against women, the patriarchal family, religion, and political violence. I then borrow components of Galtung's violence triangle (direct, cultural, and structural violence), and Menjívar's multisided violence (structural, symbolic, everyday, political, gender/gendered, and legal violence) frameworks to unearth how these forms of violence affect policy implementation and enforcement in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

International Human Rights Conventions

Out of concern for rising threats of violence against women globally, feminist and human rights groups have pushed for international standards to prevent, sanction, and eliminate discrimination and violence against women. Consequently, in 1979, the United Nations established the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and in 1994, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women, more commonly known as the Convention of Belém do Pará. On the one hand, CEDAW pushed to end global discrimination against women in political and public life, representation, education, employment, health, economic and social life, law, and marriage and family life, among other areas. The 1979 Convention defines "discrimination against women" as:

> any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, and exercise of women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. (UN Women, 2019)

On the other hand, the Convention of Belém do Pará recognizes violence against women as an international human rights violation, and defines it as "any act of conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the

public or the private sphere." (OAS, 2019) Article 2 of the Convention details the circumstances in which these physical, sexual or psychological forms of violence are deemed violations of women's human rights, such as when they take place "within the family or domestic unit," "in the community and . . . [when they are] perpetrated by any person, including, among others, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or any other place," and "[those which are] perpetrated or condoned by the state or its agents." (OAS, 2019)

National Policy Responses

Guatemala

Feminist groups and activists in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have used these international standards to push their states to combat and criminalize gender-based discrimination and violence through national law. In Guatemala, these laws include: Law to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Intrafamily Violence (Decree No. 97-96), passed in 1996, Law for the Dignification and Integral Promotion of Women (Decree No. 7-99) from 1999, Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women (Decree No. 22-2008), passed in 2008, and Law Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking of Persons (Decree 9-2009) from 2009.

The Law to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Intrafamily Violence (1996) defines intrafamily violence as "any action or omission that directly or indirectly causes physical, sexual, psychological or patrimonial harm or suffering, both in the public and private [sphere], to a person who is a member of the family group, on behalf of relatives, cohabiters or former cohabiters, spouse or former spouse, or with whom they have sons or daughters." (República de Guatemala, 1996) The law calls for state institutions to maintain a registry of reports and declares that magistrate's courts on duty must deal with matters related to the application of this law. Though it

demands national police protect victims and detain resistant aggressors, this legislation does not outwardly criminalize acts of intrafamily violence, as no prison sentences or fines are established.

The Law for the Dignification and Integral Promotion of Women (1999) defines discrimination against women as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on sex, ethnicity, age and religion . . . [that] impairs or nullifies recognition, enjoyment, or exercise of social and individual rights set forth in the Political Constitution of the Republic." (República de Guatemala, 1999) Violence against women is laid out as any act or action that, due to conditions of gender, inflicts physical, moral, or psychological harm on a woman.[2] The law calls for State protection of the family, equal access to vocational education and training, childcare services for working mothers, pre- and post-natal care services, and judicial equality, to combat social, economic, political, and cultural discrimination and violence against women.

The Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women (2008) defines femicide as the "violent death of a woman, in the context of unequal power relations between men and women, caused by using the power of gender against women." (República de Guatemala, 2008) This legislation outlaws physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence against women, which it defines as follows: physical violence causes physical harm or suffering to a woman, psychological violence includes controlling behavior or intimidation, sexual violence violates women's sexual freedom, and economic violence affects women's access to material goods that belong to them by right or that cause damage or loss of objects/material property. Under this law, femicide is punishable by 25 to 50 years in prison, crimes of physical and/or sexual violence are penalized with 5 to 12 years, and psychological and/or economic violence with 5 to 8 years.

[2] The law does not spell out what constitutes "moral harm."

The Law Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking of Persons (2009) condemns physical, psychological, and/or sexual violence and establishes the following principles: confidentiality of information collected from victimized persons, individual and differentiated protection, no re-victimization in legal processes, no discrimination, respect for cultural identity, and effective restitution of the victims' exercise of rights. (República de Guatemala, 2009) This law is not unprecedented, as it adapts certain articles from the country's Penal Code. Article 28 of the law, for instance, draws from Article 173 (on rape) of the Penal Code.[3] Sexual exploitation (defined as the promotion of prostitution) of minors and persons of legal age is penalized with a minimum of 5 years' prison time, while human trafficking is punishable by 8 to 18 years in prison and a fine of 300,000 to 500,000 Quetzales (≈$40,000 to $65,000 USD).

El Salvador

In El Salvador, policies that address violence against women include: Law Against Intrafamily Violence (Decree No. 902), passed in 1996, Law of Equality, Equity and Eradication of Discrimination Against Women (Decree No. 645), signed into law in 2011, and Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (Decree No. 520), also from 2011. The Law Against Intrafamily Violence (1996) defines intrafamily violence as "any act or omission, direct or indirect, that causes harm, physical, sexual, or psychological suffering, or death to members of a family." (República de El Salvador, 1996) This legislation breaks down intrafamily violence into four types: psychological (direct or indirect actions that control or degrade someone's actions, behavior, beliefs, or decisions), physical (actions or behaviors that threaten or injure

[3] Article 173 of the Penal Code states that, "Anyone who, with physical or psychological violence, gains carnal access vaginally, anally or orally to another person, or inserts any part of their body or objects, by any of the indicated routes, or forces another person to insert it themselves, will be sanctioned with a prison sentence of eight to twelve years." (República de Guatemala, 1973)

someone's physical integrity), sexual (actions that force someone to participate in physical or verbal sexual contact), and patrimonial (actions that prevent the adequate care of family needs or damage, lose, or destruct financial assets). Though the law requires police officers to seek medical attention for victims, preserve evidence, and detain aggressors, it does not establish prison sentences for perpetrators.

The Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (2011) criminalizes seven types of violence: economic (actions that limit, control, or prevent women's economic survival), feminicidal (violent deaths of women that result from misogynistic behaviors and lead to state impunity), physical (acts that cause physical harm and/or suffering), psychological/emotional (acts that cause emotional harm), patrimonial (actions that destroy, harm, or retain objects, personal documents, and valuables), sexual (acts that threaten or violate women's right to voluntarily choose sexual encounters), and symbolic (messages, values, icons, or signs that reproduce relations of domination, inequality, or discrimination in social relations). Under this law, feminicide is punishable by 20 to 50 years in prison, economic violence by 1 to 6 years, patrimonial violence by 2 to 4 years, and sexual violence by 3 to 10 years.

The Law of Equality, Equity and Eradication of Discrimination Against Women (2011) aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination that directly and indirectly prevent Salvadoran women from fully exercising their citizenship rights in the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres of life. Several principles undergird this law, such as: equality (defined as an individual and collective right in terms of equal opportunity and treatment), equity (actions that lead to equality), and non-discrimination (prohibition of de jure and de facto discrimination against women). This legislation calls for state institutions to eliminate discriminatory social behaviors and functions, eradicate obstacles to women's performance and intervention in all areas of

collective and individual work, and reform laws, regulations, or resolutions that limit or deny principles of equality and non-discrimination. (República de El Salvador, 2011b)

Honduras

In Honduras, policies that address violence against women in response to international conventions include: Law Against Domestic Violence (Decree No. 132-97), signed into law in 1997, Law of Equal Opportunities for Women (Decree No. 34-2000), passed in 2000, and Article 118-A (on Femicide) in the Honduran Penal Code (Decree No. 22-2013), added in 2013. The Law Against Domestic Violence (1997) defines domestic violence as "any pattern of conduct associated with a situation of unequal exercise of power that manifests itself in the use of physical, psychological, patrimonial and/or economic, and sexual violence." (República de Honduras, 1997) This legislation recognizes four different types of domestic violence: physical (actions that harm or undermine the corporeal integrity of women), psychological (actions that degrade or control the actions, behaviors, beliefs, or decisions of women), sexual (threatening or intimidating acts that affect the sexual integrity and self-determination of women), and patrimonial/economic (acts that lead to loss, negation, destruction, or retention of objects, personal documents, valuables, or economic rights and resources). Though the law does not establish prison sentences, aggressors may be sanctioned with 1 to 3 months of community service.

The Law of Equal Opportunities for Women (2000) defines discrimination against women as "any distinction, exclusion, or restriction based on sex, that . . . impair[s] or nullif[ies] the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise . . . of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres." (República de Honduras, 2000) This law calls on the state to design and apply public policies that promote gender equality, ensure equitable opportunity in the legal system, prevent, combat, and eradicate domestic and intrafamily violence, take

measures to prevent teenage pregnancies, provide appropriate and accessible technology that responds to the needs of women in urban and rural areas, and revise educational legislation to eliminate the division of labor by sex, among others. Those who violate any section of this law may be fined 5,000 lempiras (≈$200 USD).

The unprecedented Article 118-A on Femicide (Decree No. 23-2013) in the Honduran Penal Code defines femicide as a crime "committed by a man, or men, who kill(s) a woman for reasons related to gender, with hatred and contempt for her condition as a woman." (República de Honduras, 1983) This provision penalizes crimes of femicide with a 30 to 40 year prison sentence in the following circumstances: when the aggressor has a relationship with the victim, whether marital, free union or any other related relationship, when the crime is preceded by acts of domestic violence within the family or a situation of sexual violence, harassment, or persecution of any nature, or when the crime is committed with cruelty or when degrading/mutilating lesions are inflicted on the victim before or after their death.

Efficacy of National Policies

Despite the fact that national legislation in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras has adapted international human rights protocols, quantitative data shows that all three countries continue to reflect exceptionally high rates of female homicides, intrafamily violence, and sexual violence.[4] In Guatemala, for instance, Article 17 of the Law Against Femicide and other Forms of Violence Against Women (2008) pledges state resources to the National Coordinator for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (CONAPREVI). However,

[4] Though statistics help quantify the impact of violence against women in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, their accuracy comes into question because many crimes go unreported due to structural factors, fear of a perpetrator's retaliation, lack of faith in the justice system, as well as the normalization of violence in the everyday lives of people.

reported cases of intrafamily violence steadily increased in the first five years after the law passed in 2008. (see Appendices, Table 1) And though these rates have decreased since 2013, as of 2018, they remained far higher than they were in 2008. After the addition of Article 118-A on femicide to the Honduran Penal Code in 2013, female homicide rates in Honduras only slightly decreased, going from 478 reported cases in 2015 to 383 in 2018. (see Appendices, Table 2) Reports of sexual violence against women in Honduras, however, remain high, running upwards of 2,000 cases a year since 2010. (see Appendices, Table 3) In El Salvador, after the Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (2011) passed, rates of intrafamily violence shot up in 2013 and then decreased in 2015. (see Appendices, Table 4)

While the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have drawn up these national laws, they fail to allocate sufficient funds to ensure their proper implementation (Prieto-Carrón, Thomson, and Macdonald, 2007). Additionally, law enforcement is affected by police officers who do not take this legislation seriously. In El Salvador, for instance, a female police agent observes that her male counterparts often claim there are no available personnel or vehicles when her precinct receives a domestic violence call. (de los Reyes, 2013) In another tragic example, 22-year-old Graciela Eugenia Ramírez Chávez died after her fiancé stabbed her 56 times in February 2018. According to Douglas Meléndez, former attorney general of El Salvador, "on repeated occasions neighbours called the [emergency number] to report the victim was being attacked but the police never turned up." (Griffin, 2018) Similarly, Menjívar and Bejarano (2004) note these patterns in the testimony of a Salvadoran immigrant woman: "The police? Who would think of calling the police back there [in El Salvador]? If you called them (in case of domestic violence) they'll think it's a prank and they won't even bother coming!" (p. 133)

Defining Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Women

Conceptualizations of violence constantly adapt and change depending on context, place, and space. Due to a diversity of beliefs and practices when it comes to violence, I operationalize the Convention of Belém do Pará's definition of violence against women in this study: "any act of conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere." I use the terms "gender-based violence" and "violence against women" interchangeably to broadly refer to intrafamily violence (i.e. intimate partner violence, domestic violence), sexual violence, femicide/feminicide, and gender discrimination.[5] These forms of violence can, and often do, overlap.

One of the ongoing theoretical debates regarding violence against women has centered on the terms femicide and feminicide. Feminist writers Jill Radford and Diana Russell originally defined the term femicide as "the murder of women and girls *because* they are female." (1992; Russell and Harmes, 2001) Mexican feminist activist Marcela Lagarde adopted the term feminicide to emphasize that these killings are not only gender-motivated, but are also products of impunity and institutional violence on behalf of law enforcement, forensic, legislative, and judicial systems. (Toledo Vásquez, 2009; Lagarde, 2006, 2008; Walsh and Menjívar, 2016a, 2016b) According to Fregoso and Bejarano (2010), feminicide is a "systemic [form of] violence rooted in social, political, economic, and cultural inequalities" and is "both public and private, implicating both the state (directly or indirectly) and individual perpetrators (private or state actors)." (p. 5) Because this work looks at different social, political, and structural factors that affect policy implementation and enforcement, I operationalize Lagarde's term feminicide.

[5] See Discussion section for conceptual definitions of the terms "gender violence" and "gendered violence."

Research Objectives and Goals

This study has several objectives: 1) understand the role that political discourse plays in shaping narratives on crimes against women, 2) identify factors that may impact the implementation of policies that combat feminicide, sexual violence, intrafamily violence, and all other gender-based forms of violence, 3) understand how these factors may contribute to cycles of gender-based violence, and 4) unpack how violence, especially violence against women, is understood in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

To better comprehend how violence is understood and shaped in these countries, I foreground my research with some historical context—more specifically, recent histories of civil conflict and United States intervention in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. These histories help contextualize and illustrate how state violence and terror have translated almost directly into violence against women today. Sanford (2008) notes that some of these connections include the torture and sexual violence practiced against political dissenters during civil conflicts, and the mutilation and rape that often accompanies the murder of women in the present day. As I argue later on in this work, these histories also lay a groundwork for understanding the normalized use of violence in everyday life during times of conflict, which has contributed, in part, to the naturalization and minimization of crimes against women in the present. However, since this study does not focus specifically on histories of civil conflict and U.S. intervention in Central America, I only go into this background briefly and broadly.[6]

[6] It is important to acknowledge, as Carey and Torres (2010) highlight, that identifying histories of U.S. intervention and civil conflict "as the sole or even primary [catalysts of contemporary cycles of violence in Central America] ignores a greater historical trend of widespread violence against women and disregard for their civil rights that dates back at least to the dictatorships of the early twentieth century." (p. 144–145) However, these distant histories are beyond the scope of this work. See Carey and Torres (2010) for more on these "precursors to femicide."

Historical Context

Guatemala

In Guatemala, United States intervention in the twentieth century began with the United Fruit Company (UFCO), a U.S.-owned and operated corporation that produced and marketed tropical fruits, mainly bananas, grown in Latin America. The UFCO first moved into Guatemala in 1901, and over the next twenty years, gained a strong hold over land, transportation, and regional trade. As the influence of the UFCO grew, the Guatemalan government's power became severely limited. Consequently, in 1921, Carlos Herrera, the Guatemalan president at the time, pushed for agrarian reform that threatened the status of UFCO contracts. Consequently, military forces ousted him less than a year after he took office.

The UFCO would once again face opposition from the Guatemalan government thirty years later, when democratically elected President Jacobo Árbenz came to power in 1951. Árbenz ardently supported agrarian reform and opposed economic dependency. His government passed the Law of Agrarian Reform (1952), which promoted the distribution of idle and public land to the landless at a fraction of its market cost. (Stewart, 2009, p. 404) As a result, the U.S. labelled the Árbenz government a communist threat and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) staged an overthrow. The U.S. government installed a series of leaders after Árbenz, which inspired a wave of armed resistance. Guerilla forces waged a war against the state in 1960, and in response, U.S. military advisors trained the Guatemalan army in brutal "counterinsurgency" techniques to quell dissenters: death squads, air bombs, and scorched earth policy. (Stewart, 2009, p. 406–407)

The civil conflict reached genocidal proportions under the leadership of General Efraín Ríos Montt from 1982 to 1983. (Sanford, 2003) Ríos Montt pledged he would eliminate guerilla forces as he ordered soldiers to sweep through the mountains of the Guatemalan highlands and

wipe out entire villages of Indigenous Maya deemed to have colluded with the "enemy." Following Ríos Montt's political reign, the internal armed conflict carried on through death squads that operated on behalf of the military in the highlands and in the capital. (Stewart, 2009, p. 410) According to the Center for Justice and Accountability, over 200,000 people were killed or forcibly disappeared throughout this civil conflict, and a United Nations-sponsored Historical Clarification Commission identified that 83% of the victims were Indigenous Maya. U.S.-funded government forces committed 93% of the human rights violations that occurred during this time. (CJA, 2018) The civil conflict between the Guatemalan government and leftist rebel groups lasted thirty-six years (1960–1996), and is now infamously known as *La Violencia*.

El Salvador

In El Salvador, the historical roots of an internal armed conflict can be traced back to agrarian reform in the late nineteenth century. In 1881, the Salvadoran state dispossessed the land of *campesinos* (farm peasants) when it abolished communal forms of property ownership to make way for private coffee production estates. The reform contributed to the rise of a small oligarchy that possessed most of the country's wealth and political power. These land reforms brought about numerous farmer-led uprisings from the late 1800s until 1932. Oligarchic elites, in turn, sponsored security forces to violently repress popular resistance. (Wolf, 2017, p. 1) From January to July 1932, the Salvadoran army suppressed these rebellions and killed approximately 30,000 people (most of them Indigenous) in a massacre now known as *La Matanza.*

Agrarian reform and *La Matanza* paved the way for contemporary political-power structures in El Salvador, as the state, North (1982) claims, began to rely "increasingly on coercion to guarantee the stability and expansion of the new economic order." (p. 62) In response to repressive structural conditions from a century of elite control, and the assassination of Archbishop

Óscar Arnulfo Romero,[7] guerrilla forces launched an armed struggle in 1980; these forces identified collectively as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).[8] Oligarchic elites, however, were determined to secure their socioeconomic privileges. In turn, they founded their own party, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), and funded extrajudicial death squads to suppress the opposition. (Wolf, 2017) Over the course of the civil conflict, the United States government trained many Salvadoran soldiers on U.S. soil and channeled nearly $6 billion in aid to ensure a victory against socialist and communist ideologies. (Howard, 2008) Consequently, the FMLN fought against U.S.-backed Salvadoran military forces for a span of twelve years (1980–1992), during which approximately 80,000 people were killed.

Honduras

Though Honduras has not directly experienced an internal armed conflict as Guatemala and El Salvador have, U.S. intervention, as well as state violence and terror, have permeated the Honduran social fabric and political economy in other ways. For one thing, the Honduran government received financial and military assistance from the Reagan administration to train, support, and provide shelter for the contras, U.S.-backed right-wing rebel groups designed to bring down the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. According to a publication from *The New York Times* (1986), "American troops [were] regularly stationed in Honduras and [took] part in joint

[7] Óscar Arnulfo Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, is a martyr for Catholics. His sermons linked "religious power with revolution," as he advocated for peace, democracy, and national reconciliation. (Landau, 1993, p. 87) In March 1980, Salvadoran military personnel killed Romero while he was giving Mass. This was early on in the civil conflict between the government and guerilla forces. (Peterson and Peterson, 2008, p. 511–512)

[8] Farabundo Martí was a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary leader who led the 1932 agrarian uprising in El Salvador. Members of the Salvadoran military assassinated him in February 1932, shortly after the rebellion began.

exercises with Honduran troops. Military instructors under contract to the Central Intelligence Agency ha[d] trained contras in the past at isolated camps in Honduras."

U.S. intervention and state violence intersected once again in Honduras following a coup d'état in 2009, in which military forces overthrew democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya. Prior to his overthrow, Zelaya had pushed for economic reforms to increase minimum wage, reduce public debt, build new schools, and subsidize public transportation. He also made a call to rewrite the 1982 Honduran constitution, originally written under the regime of Policarpo Paz García, a U.S.-backed military autocrat. (Zunes, 2016) National courts ruled Zelaya's actions illegal and unconstitutional, despite the fact that they were legal under the 2006 Honduran Civil Participation Act (FERH, 2009, p. 6–7; Gervais and Estévez, 2011, p. 2) After the coup, the state remained heavily militarized; police and military personnel arrested, beat, tortured, or killed anyone who publicly expressed opposition to the new government.

Though the public democratically elected Zelaya, the U.S. government stood by the notion that the coup constituted a crucial step in Honduras' path to democracy. The OAS and UN General Assembly called for the "immediate and unconditional return" of Zelaya, but the U.S. evaded openly taking a side. In turn, the United States sponsored new elections that were "marred by violence and media censorship," in which Porfirio Lobo was elected the new president. (Zunes, 2016) The U.S. Department of State also continued to channel aid to Honduras under the justification that it was unclear if the military overthrow constituted a coup d'état. (Zunes, 2016) Menjívar and Walsh (2017) argue that post-coup state violence now "concentrates on 'common' criminals, often gangs . . . [and that] repressive tactics used against the opposition in the past are now used to combat gangs and criminal groups." (p. 224)

State Violence and Legacies on Gender-Based Violence

Though a decade has passed since the Honduran coup d'état, and over two decades since the end of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan internal armed conflicts, legacies of state violence continue to thrive in the political, economic, and social fabric of these countries. United States imperialism has arguably been a leading contributor to the persistence of state violence in Central America, especially considering that military intervention increased capacities for violence, extended the duration of conflict, and obstructed mitigation and peace processes (Rosser, 1995, p. 180). Historically, U.S. intervention in these countries has installed autocrats into positions of political power, interfered with democratic elections, and aggravated social, economic, and state power imbalances.

Scholars such as Sanford (2008) and Carey and Torres (2010) have been at the forefront on discussions of state violence and its legacies on contemporary cycles of violence against women in Guatemala. Sanford, for instance, identifies connections between historical contexts of state terror and impunity for perpetrators of war crimes and contemporary social cleansing campaigns led by the state in Guatemala. (2008, p. 106). She defines social cleansing as "a mechanism of selective or arbitrary repression that is systematically produced by either armed actors with ties to the state or by private actors who carry out repression with the acquiescence, complicity, support, or toleration (whether deliberate or involuntary) of the state." (Sanford, 2008, p. 110) During the internal armed conflict, mass-scale sexual violence and torture became common tools of repression at the hands of the state. Today, Sanford argues, patterns of social cleansing can be seen in the signs of torture that mark the bodies of victims of feminicide: strangulation, beatings, bound hands and feet, and sexual abuse, among others.

Carey and Torres (2010) also argue that the Guatemalan internal armed conflict embedded systemic impunity into the country's legal and social fabric, which "post-war" peace processes that absolved most perpetrators of war crimes further cemented. (Carey and Torres, 2010, p. 144; CEH, 1999; Consorcio Actores de Cambio, 2006) Though Guatemala and El Salvador are classified as "post-war" societies, and Honduras as "post-coup," political sociologist Julia Zulver notes how the prospect of "thousands of former combatants return[ing] home without . . . employment, and thousands of weapons . . . circulat[ing] in civilian hands" places into perspective widespread and growing violence in the region. (2016, p. 173) Later on in this work, I will discuss how everyday routines of torture, sexual violence, and murder at the hands of the state during the Guatemalan and Salvadoran internal armed conflicts, and following the Honduran coup d'état, helped normalize and naturalize the use of violence in each of these countries. (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 1996; Bourgois, 2001; Menjívar, 2008, 2011; Walsh and Menjívar, 2016a) As I show next, my survey of the literature indicates that scholars have drawn from these historical contexts to understand how cultural and symbolic violence, political and legal violence, and structural and economic violence have contributed to and/or exacerbated gender-based violence in contemporary Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In my review of the literature, I surveyed secondary academic sources that explore causes of gender-based violence and assess public policies that target these forms of violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. I group these academic works based on pillars in Galtung's (1969, 1990) violence triangle and Menjívar's (2008, 2011) multisided violence frameworks. Broadly speaking, both frames adapt a multifaceted approach to violence: Galtung's violence

triangle explains violence in terms of direct, structural, and cultural forces, while Menjívar's multisided violence looks at this phenomenon through several lenses: structural, symbolic, everyday, political, gender/gendered, and legal violence.[9] Because most of the literature I survey integrates multiple components of these two frameworks, the groupings I set up in this review consist of pairs: cultural and symbolic violence, political and legal violence, and structural and economic violence. Economic violence is not an explicit component of these frames; however, it appears prominently in the literature and is, arguably, encompassed in the structural violence pillar of Galtung's (1969, 1990) and Menjívar's (2008, 2011) frameworks.

Cultural and Symbolic Violence

The readings grouped under the cultural and symbolic violence perspective contend that a prevailing *machismo* culture in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras contributes to ongoing cycles of gender-based violence. In "The Myths of Violence: Gender, Conflict, and Community in El Salvador," Hume (2008) observes how violence forms a cycle in El Salvador, one in which "gender identities are intimately linked to the performance of violence" and greater social-economic-political structures reinforce gender hierarchies as well as the discursive and material practice of violence. (2008, p. 60) Drawing from interviews and participatory workshops conducted in a self-help group for men convicted of domestic violence in two low-income communities, Hume assesses the role of symbolic structures in cycles of violence; more specifically, she examines the family, state, and community as "productive sites of violence." (2008, p. 72) In one example, Hume reflects on the testimony of a male study participant, who was physically and emotionally abused as a child, to understand how and why Salvadoran men and

[9] See Discussion Section for a breakdown of Galtung's (1969, 1990) violence triangle and Menjívar's (2008, 2011) multisided violence frameworks.

boys are taught to "be firm." These symbolic gender constructions, she then argues, ensure that "domination and its associated use of violence have ensured and reproduced male privilege, and this model has been consistently reinforced by wider social and cultural practices." (2008, p. 65)

In the article "Femicide in Central America: Is Creating Female-Friendly Urban Zones Really the Solution?," Alex McAnarney (2012), director of communication at the Center for Justice and International Law, discusses Ciudad Mujer—government-sponsored centers—in El Salvador. In these centralized spaces, women can access a range of services that relate to the protection of women's rights, sexual and reproductive health, and childcare. In this piece, McAnarney voices the concerns of Salvadoran feminist groups about Ciudad Mujer, many of whom question whether the initiative offers a long-term solution to gender-based violence; for long-term change, they argue, changing a culture of *machismo*[10] and *marianismo*[11] is necessary. Additionally, McAnarney critiques the Salvadoran government for enforcing an absolute ban on abortion, while simultaneously "protecting" women through Ciudad Mujer.

Political and Legal Violence

The literature grouped under the political and legal violence category broadly looks at how gaps in law enforcement, judicial, and legislative frameworks in Central American countries

[10] *Machismo* is a concept "characterized by an overt, active heterosexuality" and hypermasculinity (Hardin, 2002, p. 3). Historically, *machismo* has been applied "to any male trait within Latin America, especially if it can be related to male sexuality or power" and presented as a phenomenon that "most notably manifest[s] among lower-class men." (Hardin, 2002, p. 2). Due to its stereotypical and individualistic nature, I refrain from integrating the concept of *machismo* into my analysis.

[11] Originally developed by Stevens (1973), *marianismo* is a concept that constructs archetypes of women within a heteropatriarchal social framework. Hardin (2002) elaborates that *marianismo* "reduc[es] a woman's models to venerated virgin-mother and reviled whore-mother, neither of which allow a woman much latitude for a real identity." (p. 1–2) Any woman who is not considered virginal, chaste, righteous, and/or pure is, therefore, deemed a "bad woman." In turn, "good women" support heteropatriarchy.

contribute to cycles of gender-based violence. In "The Guatemalan Femicide: An Epidemic of Impunity," legal expert Natalie Velasco (2008) argues that Guatemala's institutional infrastructure is a major setback to laws designed to target gender-based violence, as evidenced by inadequate resources, delayed initiation of investigations, and failure to preserve the crime scene and collect evidence. Law enforcement, judicial and legislative systems have essentially permitted structural impunity to thrive, thus preventing any significant progress. To highlight how law enforcement systems and institutions exacerbate cycles of violence, Velasco draws from numerous Guatemalan case studies, such as that of Claudina Isabel Velásquez Paiz (who was murdered) and Rodi Alvarado (who escaped from her abuser and sought asylum in the United States).

Velasco (2008) also draws attention to Guatemalan national efforts to prevent violence against women, including the ratification of the Convention of Belém do Pará, the creation of the National Coordinator for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (CONAPREVI), and the establishment of a Special Commission on Femicide. In her critique of the Guatemalan state's response to the Convention of Belém do Pará, she notes that "the temporary suspension of article 200 [of the Guatemalan Penal Code] that allows rapists to escape culpability by marrying their victims is a prime example of how domestic law conflicts with the Convention obligations." (2008, p. 414) Her analysis of the ways in which domestic law in Guatemala conflicts with the Convention of Belém do Pará parallels anthropologist Ana María Alonso's (1995) discussion of domestic violence law and its rationalization of patriarchy in nineteenth-century Chihuahua, Mexico. Alonso claims that "legislation criminalizing domestic violence in Mexico was part and parcel of a project of state formation that transformed and rationalized rather than undermined patriarchy," exemplified by the economic dependency of many women who reported incidents of domestic violence. (1995, p. 30) Alonso recalls how women would often retract claims

against their husband's abuses after realizing they could not survive without their partner's financial support.

In their article "Crimes Without Punishment: An Update on Violence Against Women and Impunity in Guatemala," Musalo and Bookey (2014) discuss some of the structural obstacles to policies designed to combat gender-based violence. For instance, they claim that language barriers and geographic location pose a challenge to Indigenous Maya women who attempt to report incidents of violence to authorities. Musalo and Bookey also note that "deeply rooted patterns of discrimination in society" have helped normalize gender-based violence in Guatemalan culture. (2014, p. 106) Similar to Musalo and Bookey (2014), Velasco (2008) looks at how crucial law enforcement officers are in making or breaking cycles of violence. She notes that police officers place women in precarious situations whenever they ignore reports of missing women. These institutional weaknesses may be attributed to issues such as systemically embedded impunity, as well as other symbolic and economic factors.

Structural and Economic Violence

The readings I grouped under the structural and economic violence category assess how structural forms of violence and neoliberal economic reforms expose women to further violence. Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro (2010), a senior policy analyst at the Latino Policy Forum, assesses the effects of the Génesis Microfinance Program initiated in the Honduran capital city of Tegucigalpa. Though the program's objective is to help Honduran women gain economic autonomy and work their way out of the informal sector through self-employment, Vonderlack-Navarro argues that the program's sole focus on women is not sufficient; the Génesis Microfinance Program overlooks the nature of family dynamics in Honduras and men's roles in the macroeconomic structure. Drawing from program observation, 40 semi-structured interviews with

participants, and interviews with Génesis program staff, Vonderlack-Navarro observes that some men—after witnessing their wives generate a form of income through the program—developed "*machista* excuses" and resorted to alcohol abuse, infidelity or desertion, when unable to provide sufficient financial support for their families. Consequently, several of the women in the study faced direct risk of repeated victimization, as their partners responded to their economic autonomy with other forms of violence.

Prieto-Carrón *et al*. (2007) find correlations between the rising number of femicides and an increase in women's economic autonomy in Central America. To assert their point, they note that an unequal and hierarchical globalized economy has pushed many Central American women to secure some form of employment as *maquila* workers. Prieto-Carrón *et al.* claim that these women, who fight for survival in a precarious neoliberal global market, are deemed "sexual objects lacking value, worth and respectability as a result of their structural position in the global economy." (2007, p. 30) The neoliberal global economic order thus relegates working class women as worthless, temporary, and disposable.

Linking Multisided Violence with Gender-Based Violence

In a speech delivered to a United Nations conference on "Global Strategies for Achieving Fairness in the Courts: Domestic Violence" in Geneva, Switzerland in February 1992, feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon connects notions of cultural and symbolic violence with international legal and historical legacies to explain how and why violence against women remains a major global human rights concern. In her speech, MacKinnon (2007) claims that viewing violence against women as a human rights issue "changes what you see or should: the family that breeds it, the customs that justify it, the cultural specificity that hides it, the religion that excuses or sanctifies it, the wars that make its organized quality official, the legal notions like torture that

exclude it, [and] the institutions of law enforcement that essentially legalize it." (p. 32) The family values, customs, cultural specificity, and religion MacKinnon highlights recall cultural and symbolic violence, while wars, legal notions, and law enforcement connect with political and legal violence. Fragile institutions, embedded gender inequalities, systemic impunity, and socioeconomic hierarchies characterize socio-political-economic structures in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Yet, it helps to understand that fragility in one area draws connections to those in others. For example, unless normative gender expectations are reassessed and challenged, the likelihood that institutional and economic reform will holistically prevent, sanction, and eradicate violence against women is unlikely.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Fieldwork Logistics

This study draws upon sociologically-based fieldwork I carried out in Costa Rica and Guatemala in August 2019. I conducted eight in-depth, semi-structured interviews in Spanish with administrators from women's and human rights organizations based in San José, Costa Rica, Guatemala City, Guatemala, and San Salvador, El Salvador. Interviews lasted between 60 to 120 minutes. I later transcribed and translated the data into English. In Costa Rica, I visited the National Archives, National Library, Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres [National Institute of Women] (INAMU), and the Centro de Investigación en Estudios de la Mujer [Research Center on Women's Studies] (CIEM). In the National Archives, I reviewed government records, such as correspondences between the Minister for the Status of Women and the INAMU from 2004 to 2014. Some of these correspondences included proposals to create a specialized national center to address sexual violence and calls for the Ministry of Education to incorporate violence prevention

programs into the national school curriculum. At the National Library, INAMU and CIEM, I collected academic literature, policy briefs, and data reports on gender-based violence in Costa Rica and other Central American countries.

In addition to archival and library research, I conducted in-person interviews with administrators from two women's organizations based in San José: Centro Feminista de Información y Acción [Feminist Information and Action Center] (CEFEMINA) and Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER (Acciones Estratégicas por los Derechos Humanos) [Citizen Association ACCEDER (Strategic Actions for Human Rights)].[12] CEFEMINA promotes the self-organization of communities and groups interested in defending human rights, as well as the development of regional and national solidarity networks for women (CEFEMINA, 2012). Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER provides legal and political advocacy to prevent and eradicate violence and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity (ACCEDER, 2020). During my stay in Costa Rica, I also conducted an interview over the phone with an administrator from Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres [Salvadoran Women's Movement], a women's organization based in San Salvador. This organization develops projects and campaigns that promote the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental rights of rural and urban women. (MSM, 2020)

In Guatemala City, I visited the National Library to gather local literature on gender-based violence, but focused the bulk of my efforts on interviews with human rights and women's organizations. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with representatives from five

[12] Selena, a graduate student from the University of Costa Rica whose research focuses on women's rights in Central America, was also present during my interviews with administrators from CEFEMINA and Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER. My thesis committee chair, Dr. Cecilia Menjívar, put us in touch prior to my arrival "in the field"; Selena is one of her international research associates.

organizations/institutes based in the capital city: Fundación Sobrevivientes [Survivor's Foundation], Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales [Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences] (FLACSO), Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres [Guatemalan Women's Group], Observatorio en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva [Sexual and Reproductive Health Observatory] (OSAR), and Colectiva para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres [Collective for the Defense of Women's Rights] (CODEFEM).

Fundación Sobrevivientes provides specialized care and temporary shelter to women, children, and adolescents who have been victims of physical, psychological, and sexual violence. (Fundación Sobrevivientes, 2020) FLACSO is an intergovernmental organization with chapters in several Latin American countries; the Guatemalan chapter hosts teaching and research programs that encourage critical thinking, national development, and democracy. (FLACSO-Guatemala, 2020) Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres pushes for public policies that address oppression, subordination, discrimination, and racism in Guatemalan society. (GGM, 2020) OSAR collects data to measure advances in the implementation of policies on sexual and reproductive health in Guatemala. (OSAR, 2020) Lastly, since its inception, CODEFEM has initiated and contributed to the reform of laws on gender-based violence in Guatemala in accordance with CEDAW and the Convention of Belém do Pará. (CODEFEM, 2020) I spoke with one representative from each organization, with the exception of CODEFEM; two administrators were present for the interview.

Research Epistemology

I adopted a feminist, decolonial epistemology for this study. As a feminist researcher, I strived to be transparent about my own biases throughout the research process because, as Haraway (1988, 1991) argues and Llewelyn (2007) reminds us, "our social positions and personal identities shape our understanding of a particular event, process, or thing . . . [and] accurate knowledge

claims can only originate from a position that is explicitly partial, located, and therefore accountable." (p. 300) I understood that, as a graduate student from UCLA, an institution in the Global North and specifically in the United States, my research participants would likely have preconceived notions of who I am and my beliefs. However, as Wright (2006) notes, I say this with caution because I do not have "the appropriate knowledge to know fully what 'others' think of me or a perspective outside of myself to relate some version of how I appear in the field." (p. 15) To avoid reifying hierarchical, gendered relations of power that often marginalize women during research processes, this study frames women as agents and producers of knowledge who can improve their social positions, rather than as beneficiaries. (Molyneux, 1985; Connelly, Li, MacDonald, and Parpart, 2000; Beetham and Demetriades, 2007, p. 201) To strengthen the quality of my interviews, I aimed to balance relations of power between myself and participants, which Oakley (1981) claims is "best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship." (p. 41) To achieve this, I strived to establish a comfortable and secure interview environment and made clear to my informants that I was there to learn from their expertise. Prior to the start of an interview, I also informed participants that they were free to ask me any questions about myself and the study at any point throughout our conversation.

For my decolonial epistemology, I draw from Coddington's (2017) two responses to the "accounting of research and its doing": proceeding and refusing. In proceeding with this research, I remained transparent about my "funding, career stage, [and] time limitations," as these factors all shaped the decisions I had to make in the course of my project. (Coddington, 2017, p. 318) In terms of "refusing" to engage in the research if it poses too many risks for participants, I deliberately chose not to interview victims of gender-based violence (or their families) since it

may have exposed them to great danger. Because victims and their families have already shared their experiences with others in the past (Bellino, 2010), I intend to contextualize the stories that have been shared with what representatives from women's organizations and other key informants are saying about gender-based violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

Research Methodology

Because this project looks at numerous laws that address gender-based forms of violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, it is a multiple case study. This variant of case study research includes two or more observations of the same phenomenon. (Santos and Eisenhardt, 2004, p. 684) I selected Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras with the extreme case method, which, Gerring (2007) claims and Walsh and Menjívar (2016) recall, "focuses on cases with extreme outcomes such as notable successes or failures." (2016, p. 592) A multiple case study approach allowed me to more critically examine policies on gender-based violence in these three countries as I drew from different data sources. As with all methodologies, there are drawbacks to a case study approach, such as the study's comparative potential. Due to a small sample size and because my case study research is situated in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, the qualitative data cannot be generalized, at the empirical level, to other countries and regions. For this reason, as Chang, Torrez, Ferguson, and Sagar (2017) state, I simply use the "individual experiences [of my informants], as well as commonalities among them, as a launching point into a much larger, complex, and nuanced conversation" about gender-based violence and policy in these countries. (p. 211)

Research Methods

Though research methods are, arguably, politically neutral, researchers can adopt a certain epistemology based on the tools they use and why. (Hoare, 2007, p. 181) I integrated a feminist,

decolonial epistemology in my work by using in-depth, semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis. Semi-structured interviews have strengths and limitations. On the one hand, they allowed me to collect diverse perspectives, as informants had greater freedom to steer the conversation toward any relevant points of discussion that were not explicitly mentioned in my questions. Due to my position as an outside researcher, interviewees may have also felt more comfortable sharing their thoughts with me because I would not spread gossip within the local community. On the other hand, outsider status made securing a level of trust with which the representatives of the women's organizations felt comfortable discussing their thoughts and work with me an ambiguous process.

The organizations I interacted with came about from a combination of non-probability sampling methods, which include snowball, purposive, and convenience sampling. My contact with OSAR, CODEFEM, FLACSO, CEFEMINA, and Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER came from snowball sampling methods. Because all of my participants were representatives from human rights or women's organizations, I also used purposive sampling.[13] Some organizations I discovered through my survey of the literature; for instance, I heard about Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres through Hume (2008) and Zulver's (2016) work in El Salvador, and Fundación Sobrevivientes and Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres through Méndez Gutiérrez's (2013) work on Guatemala. Ultimately, I contacted as many organizations/institutes as I could find that, in one capacity or another, promote gender equality and women's rights in each of the countries. Because this work only features those that responded to my request for an interview, I also employed convenience sampling, meaning that I chose informants depending on their

[13] According to Shantikumar (2018), purposive sampling "relies on the judgment of the researcher when choosing who to ask to participate. Researchers may implicitly thus choose a 'representative' sample to suit their needs, or specifically approach individuals with certain characters." McCombes (2019) claims this sampling method is best used "to gain detailed knowledge about a specific phenomenon."

availability and willingness to participate. (Shantikumar, 2018) The strengths of snowballing, purposive, and convenience sampling methods, particularly in a qualitative study such as this one, include their time- and cost-effective nature. All of these methods are, however, prone to volunteer bias, meaning that volunteers are not representative of the greater population. However, because this study focuses on dialogues with representatives from women's organizations, volunteer bias is not as great a cause of concern as it would be for a study that aims to test a hypothesis about a broader participant demographic. (McCombes, 2019) Regardless, I remain conscientious of the fact that I conducted a limited number of interviews, and am cautious in making generalizations based on the data I collected.

As discussed in my research epistemology, I deliberately chose not to interview victims of gender-based violence to avoid possible safety risks. This does not mean, however, that the administrators I spoke to within the organizations are not victims themselves. Given how systemically and systematically structural, symbolic, and gendered violence are embedded in the social fabric, it is possible that most (if not all) of the women I spoke to experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. The women in these organizations, however, likely understand the risks that come with openly working towards the advancement of women's rights, especially because they work in the public eye.[14] Because I am aware of these risks, I made efforts to protect their safety in this study. I assign pseudonyms to all of my interviewees and avoid disclosing details about their position within their respective organizations.

[14] These risks may come at the hands of the state or clandestine groups aiming to disrupt the work of human rights and women's organizations. In 2001, for instance, a group of armed men broke into the offices of a women's organization in Guatemala City; they beat and raped the women who were in the office at the time. (Sanford, 2008, p. 118)

Unfortunately, time constraints prevented me from interviewing key informants such as policymakers, femicrats/bureaucrats (i.e. judges, prosecutors), law experts, and law enforcement officials. Due to this imbalance in my methodological experience, and to somewhat account for these important perspectives, I conducted political discourse analysis by monitoring official social media posts and closely listening to speeches of former and current government officials to observe how they speak publicly about gender-based violence.

Ethical Guidelines

This study received a certificate of exemption from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Institutional Review Board (IRB). In compliance with UCLA IRB regulations, I completed the Human Research for Social and Behavioral Researchers and Staff virtual course administered by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program. Digital audio recording was an optional part of the interview process; I never shared recordings with anyone outside of the research team, which consisted of the principal investigator (myself) and my faculty supervisor, Dr. Cecilia Menjívar. I conducted participant recruitment and consent processes over email correspondence because the research posed minimal risk to the participants. I carried out all written and spoken communication with informants in Spanish because this is the predominant language spoken in urban areas of Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Discourse Analysis

Drawing from Judith Butler's claim that "the materialization of a given sex" centrally concerns "*the regulation of identificatory practices*" in public discourse (1993, p. 3), I conducted discourse analysis to explore how societal views on violence (particularly against women) are

shaped and molded by representations of femicide/feminicide, sexual violence, and intrafamily violence in official communications.

El Salvador

Quite recently, representations of crimes against women as "crimes of passion" have shone through in Salvadoran political discourse, as evidenced by a Tweet from President Nayib Bukele in July 2019: "This Monday, El Salvador only had one homicide and it is not related to gangs. It was a feminicide of passion (definitely something we must pay attention to). There is no doubt that the #PlanControlTerritorial is working. I reiterate the call for all to support it." (Bukele, 2019 July 15) In this Tweet, Bukele celebrates the fact that his Plan Control Territorial is reducing gang-related violence in El Salvador. In doing so, however, he downplays the murder of 35-year-old Keni Guadalupe Larios as merely a "feminicide of passion." Though this explanation pinpoints a possible suspect in the crime, it does little to explain why the assassination of women is so normalized as to be justified as a "crime of passion." As a result, crimes against women become a part of the everyday social fabric, which then justifies the widespread impunity that most of these crimes receive in El Salvador, but also in Guatemala and Honduras. Because these "passionate crimes" occur between intimate partners, they are relegated to the private sphere and are therefore, not a pressing responsibility for the state to address (as would likely be the case with gang violence). In labelling this murder a response from a jealous partner, Bukele creates an individualistic account of the motives behind the crime; he fails to assess how the commonality of everyday violence, which he justifies as a "crime of passion," stems, in part, from the use of widespread state terror during the country's internal armed conflict (1980–1992). Bukele's rhetoric is also harmful because it comes from a place of political power, and therefore, may appear as the "ultimate truth." The president is a national figure whose actions and rhetoric influence the way

that civil society and law enforcement officials assess the crimes that are worth prosecuting and those that are not.

Political discourse on violence against women also comes in the form of speeches. Prior to Bukele, Salvador Sánchez Cerén, of the left-wing Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) party, served as president from 2014 to 2019. The Sánchez Cerén administration's rhetoric on violence against women upheld gender social roles and attitudes in accordance with Catholic and Evangelical religious values. At a general debate of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly in September 2018, Sánchez Cerén said the following about government initiatives that address violence against women:

> As part of the defense of women's rights, we developed a Strategy for the Prevention of Feminicide and Sexual Violence, which involves all government institutions to empower women and guarantee them a life free of violence. This strategy has been strengthened with the Spotlight Initiative,[15] supported by the European Union and the United Nations, which seeks the eradication of social and institutional practices that *harm the dignity* of women. (Sánchez Cerén, 2018 Sept. 26; emphasis added)

Sánchez Cerén starts off by claiming that these initiatives are meant to "empower women and guarantee them a life free of violence." While this language is somewhat standard in policy, it is his understanding of the Spotlight Initiative as a tool to "eradicate social practices and institutions that harm the *dignity* of women" that illustrates more clearly his personal understanding of women's rights. President Mauricio Funes, Sánchez Cerén's predecessor, used similar language

[15] Launched in 2017, the Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030, especially "domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic (labour) exploitation." (Spotlight Initiative, 2020) Program interventions "focus on six mutually-reinforcing programming pillars": laws and policies, institutions, prevention, services, data, and women's movements. (Spotlight Initiative, 2020)

in a speech at the inauguration of Ciudad Mujer[16] in Usulután in September 2012: "Well, women, this reality is going to change and nobody is going to stop it from changing! No one is going to impede or set us back in this effort. These *threats to the integrity* of women are what we have set out to combat since we [the Funes administration] came to govern." (Funes and Pignato, 2012 Sept. 30; emphasis added) Both Sánchez Cerén and Funes implicitly contextualize crimes against women as harmful or threatening to a woman's honor and respectability, as the terms they use (dignity and integrity) are often connoted with qualities of honor, respect, honesty, and morality. This rhetoric falls in line with Catholic and Evangelical values, such as the expectation of women to be honorable, pure, and innocent.

In a Message to the Nation in March 2016, Sánchez Cerén also reacts to violent criminal groups in El Salvador: "Criminal gangs have committed horrendous murders that our society cannot tolerate. These criminals have reached extremes of savagery, loss of all human sensitivity. They murder girls and boys, students, pregnant women, religious [figures], the elderly and even people with disabilities." (Sánchez Cerén, 2016 Mar. 30) Although this message is not restricted to crimes against women, it once again plays into the ideals of dignity, honor, and respectability. Sánchez Cerén seems to place greater value on "pure and innocent" bodies (i.e. pregnant women, religious figures, the elderly) than on those living in the "margins of society." Thus, Sánchez Cerén antagonizes certain perpetrators and victims of violence, such as gang members and sex workers, respectively. These narratives criminalize poor, young men and deem them unworthy of human life. Rather than focusing on the historic structural and political conditions that lead many men

[16] Founded in 2011, Ciudad Mujer is a network of government-sponsored centers in El Salvador that assist victims of gender-based violence, as well as offer educational, career, financial, and health services for women. Spearheaded by former First Lady and Secretary of Social Inclusion Vanda Pignato, Ciudad Mujer has since expanded to six centers across El Salvador. (Ciudad Mujer, 2020)

and women into gangs and sex work for survival, this rhetoric dehumanizes and scapegoats those on the "fringes of society" for all sorts of crimes.

Public discourse on violence against women abounded during the political administration of left-wing President Mauricio Funes (2009-2014). Under Funes' leadership, the First Lady and Secretary of Social Inclusion, Vanda Pignato, primarily spoke publicly on issues related to violence against women. In November 2011, Pignato gave a speech at the inaugural forum debate "The violence that becomes invisible," in which she said: "We all know that behind violence against women there exists a *patriarchal* society that considers women as *objects*. Objects on which *property* is exercised, on which *determination* is exercised, and which is [inaudible] through pleasure." (Pignato, 2011 Dec. 5; emphasis added) Pignato's reference to a patriarchal society shies away from an individualistic explanation of violence, such as *machismo*, which allows crimes against women to be understood in a wider societal context. Though she emphasizes how social perceptions of women can instigate gender-based violence, she also overlooks how histories of state terror have contributed to the normalization of violence as a response to "breaches" in expected social roles. Holding the state accountable, therefore, would require an understanding of the factors that normalize the use of everyday violence against women (and men). Thus, when assessing causes or motives for violence, it is essential to question why perpetrators deem it an appropriate/normal response to different situations, such as jealousy, infidelity, and social status.

Following her speech on patriarchal societies in 2011, Pignato would go on to make another critical statement the following year. At an unprecedented meeting in June 2012, she met with government cabinet officials to construct a joint strategy to fulfill President Funes' mandate for the prevention and eradication of violence against women. During this meeting, she repeats the following statement twice for emphasis: "The President of the Republic is telling us that gender

violence against women is a public security issue and not limited to the private sphere." (Pignato, 2012 June 18) She declares that forms of violence traditionally relegated to the private sphere, such as intrafamily or domestic violence, should be viewed as a public safety concern and, therefore, the state's responsibility to address. At the end of this same speech, Pignato concludes: "We will not eradicate gender violence against women in two years, not even in consecutive years. It is not about a political change, but rather a cultural change, a social change, which begins by recognizing that women are subjects with equal rights." (Pignato, 2012 June 18) While her call for social change is important, Pignato overlooks the value of political change. Diminishing widespread impunity—perpetuated by the state's failure to properly investigate and prosecute most reported crimes—would require institutional reform so that more women are not only afforded access to systems of justice, but are also encouraged to report if necessary. Pignato, however, notes the importance of political and law enforcement actors in another speech the following day at the "Leaders' Forum on the Future of Women: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for Sustainable Development" in Río de Janeiro: "In El Salvador . . . women's rights face strong prejudice and conservatism from the justice system, the public ministry, and the police. As long as these actors do not do their part, sustainable development will not have the necessary support to become consolidated" (Pignato, 2012 June 19). Pignato addresses the importance of the justice system, public ministry, and law enforcement officers in securing gender equality and the eradication of violence against women. These institutions must have the political will to override systems of corruption and ensure that crimes are prosecuted to the fullest extent under the law.

Guatemala

As is the case in El Salvador, politicians in Guatemala have been vocal about gender-based violence and violence against women in public discourse. A recurring theme in each of the three

countries, especially in Guatemala, is the reinforcement of women's "feminine" social roles. At the Seventh Congress "Guatemalan Women Leaders: Discover the Meaning of your Life" in October 2012, the Vice President of Guatemala at the time, Roxana Baldetti, said women can "do almost, almost anything that men can do. And I say almost because men are hard workers, they are loving, they are responsible. You can do anything else perfectly well, but never let them take away your femininity, never take away the thought of dreaming and truly wanting to get ahead as women." (Baldetti, 2012 Oct. 3) Baldetti implores the members of the audience not to lose sight of their dreams and prospects for a better life. As she does this, she recalls features that she believes make them women: gentleness and femininity. Though it may not have been her intent, Baldetti's attention to these characteristics reminds women of the social roles they are expected to fulfill; this may imply that those who transgress their "delicate" feminine nature deserve to be punished and put in their place by romantic partners, family members, and on a larger scale, the state. Clearly, this indicates how constructions of femininity and masculinity justify the way people behave, as well as justify punishments for them when they fail to act accordingly. In another speech in February 2013 at the Inaugural Seminar on the Participation of Cooperative Women, Baldetti once again employs stereotypical constructions of femininity to get her point across:

> We [women] have things, actually, that we can share if we don't start and if we don't fight over who looks prettier, who wore better makeup, who put on the best earrings. If we really fight for the progress of us as women. If we really fight without envy or wanting to tear down a woman because she is enduring or fulfilling her [social] role well. On the contrary, [we must] support that woman so that we can achieve through her those goals that we have set as women. (Baldetti, 2013 Feb. 19)

In a counterintuitive effort to reinforce solidarity among women, Baldetti draws on the stereotype of the jealous woman who tears others down over beauty and success. Her comments, while innocuous at first glance, seemingly blame women for the lack of social progress; she claims that the fight for women's rights will only grow if they stop tearing each other down. The stereotypical

representation of jealous women who pine over beauty, makeup, and jewelry is harmful to the work that the women's movement and organizations have done to push forward for gender equality. It creates the illusion that they are incapable of thinking about and acting on deeper societal issues. If the dominant narrative becomes about women engaging in catfights over *superficial* topics, then arguably, a male-dominated legislature, judiciary, and law enforcement system cannot and will not take the fight for women's rights seriously at the implementation, enforcement, and prosecution level.

In public discourse, Guatemalan political figures have also praised the family as a social unit, and more specifically, the importance of a woman's role within the family. In August 2013, Vice President Roxana Baldetti emphasized the importance of women being a *light* in their families to a room of female entrepreneurs: "Whatever you do, as small or as great as it may be, do it with love. That is the great magic word that we can give, and the soul has to radiate light. You have to be a light for your companies, *you have to be a light for your family*, you have to be a light for Guatemala because Guatemala needs a lot of light." (Baldetti, 2013 Aug. 28; emphasis added) In a March 2016 speech directed toward female entrepreneurs enrolled in the Creciendo Seguro program,[17] the First Lady of Guatemala at the time, Hilda Patricia Marroquin de Morales, used a similar rhetoric to highlight the social roles that women play as mothers and income-generators in their households: "It is our job to encourage many companies to join in supporting and collaborating so that you can train and thus have more income and be able to help your families. *We, women, are very important in our families*. And well, I congratulate you and urge you to continue doing that and to be *an example for our children.*" (Marroquin de Morales, 2016

[17] Piloted by the Guatemalan government, the Creciendo Seguro program "facilitates multisectorial efforts to strengthen food and nutrition security and the economic-productive capacity of families vulnerable to" food insecurity. (Gobierno de Guatemala, 2020)

Mar. 31; emphasis added) Marroquin de Morales' language is reminiscent of development discourse that views women's labor as instrumental to national economic wealth, rather than for their own rights. Additionally, Baldetti and Marroquin de Morales impose a restrictive social role on these female entrepreneurs, reminding them that at the end of the day, their most important role is that of a mother that upholds her household in everything she does. The perception of women as foundations in familial networks can also be seen in former Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales' rhetoric. Morales, whose presidential term ran from 2016 to 2020, said the following in a November 2016 speech at a forum sponsored by Asociación La Familia Importa:[18]

> I have always said it and I have tried to live it and it is to value the importance of the family, the family as the basis of society, marriage as a pact of life between two beings who love each other and the fulfillment of human rights as a guarantee of the state of law. As you know, I am not in favor of abortion. I will always be in favor of life, family, and marriage. (Morales, 2016 Nov. 12)

Morales' pro-life stance draws strong ties to Catholic and Evangelical religious values that condemn abortion. This is not only made clear by his declaration of being in favor of life, but also by the connections he draws between life, family, and marriage. To Morales, these three social units are the very foundation of society. His emphasis on these principles, therefore, constructs Guatemalan national values around the patriarchal family. These values are also reflected in national laws. Article 7 of the Guatemalan Law for the Dignification and Integral Promotion of Women, for example, states that the "Guatemalan Nation is made up of different peoples with different ways of life, customs, traditions, forms of social organization and language, which have their foundation in the family, for which reason, the State protects and respects the family."

[18] Asociación La Familia Importa is a platform for citizens to promote the protection and strengthening of the family in Guatemala. This association organizes trainings and talks on life, family, and liberty, develops political and legal strategies to protect the family at the national and international level, as well as produces print and online publications to influence popular opinion in favor of the family unit. (AFI Guatemala, 2018)

(República de Guatemala, 1999) Reflecting this rhetoric, Morales ultimately indicates that the state's protection and investment is best spent on those who sustain the patriarchal family, as they form part of the trifecta that consolidates a healthy, stable, and righteous society.

Honduras

In Honduras, public discourse has focused, in part, on violence in the public and private sphere and the role of the family in changing a "culture" of violence. Most of this discourse comes from President Juan Orlando Hernández, who has been in office since 2014. Similar to El Salvador's former First Lady Vanda Pignato, Hernández attempts to blur the line between violence in the public and the private sphere in a February 2019 speech on Honduras' participation in the Spotlight Initiative:

> I was recently in Olancho reviewing with FUSINA[19] issues of insecurity and there was a report that drew a lot of attention. A sad, regrettable attack of such magnitude on a woman with the use of a machete. And then the other phenomenon that caught our attention was that the argument for each—we would say out of every 100, 60, 70—criminal incidents had to do, they said in quotes, with *personal issues*. Things we had not seen anywhere else. Then in Intibucá we were reviewing and there was also talk of *personal issues*. In the end, it was the argument used to see how problems were solved with violence, and that cannot be. That . . . can be solved if we work with children and young people to change the culture. (Hernández, 2019 Feb. 13; emphasis added)

In this excerpt from his speech, Hernández seems to take issue with the fact that most reported crimes in the departments of Olancho and Intibucá are labelled as "personal problems." Classifying crimes against women as personal issues follows a similar rhetoric to "crimes of passion." By identifying them as personal issues, these crimes are relegated to the private sphere where the state purportedly has no involvement. Hernández makes a breakthrough assessment of how different

[19] FUSINA refers to the Fuerza de Seguridad Interinstitucional Nacional [National Inter-Institutional Security Force]. It is a military-led task force comprised of representatives from various Honduran security units. FUSINA is tasked with "capturing high-profile gang members and drug traffickers" and running an "anti-extortion unit that controls phone intercepts," among other responsibilities. (Kinosian, 2015)

crimes are treated and addressed by the authorities in Honduras by drawing them away from an individualistic approach and looking at them within a greater context.[20] Yet, the ending statements of this excerpt seem to suggest otherwise. Though Hernández claims that problems cannot be solved with violence, it is the very same approach that FUSINA, under his leadership, has used to stake out gangs and organized criminal groups.[21] Additionally, he states it is important to work with the younger generations to change a culture of violence in Honduras; this seemingly lifts the "burden" off of the state for its history of state terror, which has arguably set a precedent for the use of violence in everyday life to "resolve personal problems." It seemingly strips the state of its responsibility to investigate reported crimes against women, as his statement instead emphasizes the work that future generations must do to change cultural discourse in Honduras. Hernández continues to push these ideas forward at the end of the same speech:

> It is a commitment that our entire society must take on: each father of the family, each mother of the family, each teacher, each spiritual leader in the different churches, the media, different organizations, because today the world is characterized by constant confrontation and a polarization that we have rarely seen in history.[22] We must work on this to promote respect, consideration, love amongst us. (Hernández, 2019 Feb. 13)

[20] In his speech, Hernández attributes these understandings to the decades-long commitment of feminist groups in Honduras that have been confronting and addressing violence against women and girls.

[21] The Honduran government used similar tactics following the military coup d'état in 2009. (Gervais and Estévez, 2011)

[22] Hernández does not clarify what he means by "constant confrontation and polarization" in his speech. However, following some brief research, I discovered that an audience member, Olivia Zúñiga, interrupted Hernández's speech by shouting, "Get out JOH [Juan Orlando Hernández], justice for Berta [Cáceres] and murderer." (EFE, 2019) The speech uploaded by the Honduran government's official YouTube account, Casa Presidencial Honduras, had Zúñiga's protest edited out. Zúñiga is the daughter of Berta Cáceres, an Indigenous Lenca environmental activist. In March 2016, armed intruders killed Cáceres in her home. Prior to her murder, Cáceres had strongly opposed the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Lenca territory. The Honduran National Criminal Court later found that executives from Desarrollos Energéticos (DESA), the company constructing the dam, hired her murderers. (Frontline Defenders, 2018)

Hernández concludes his speech by drawing attention to the role that family, teachers, religious leaders, media, and organizations have in changing the culture of violence in Honduras. Once again, he fails to mention the role of the state in these transformations, instead placing the heaviest tasks on what he deems to be the pillars of society. In this statement, Hernández also clearly pushes Catholic values forward; he emphasizes that the heteronormative family—which as he states, consists of a mother and a father—and spiritual leaders make up a key part of the Honduran social fabric and can, therefore, re-shape culture. This is not, however, a unique incident. Hernández's focus on reshaping culture comes up repeatedly in his discourse, as seen once again in a speech from a meeting on violence against women in August 2018: "We need to change a culture and that requires an aggressive communication program." (Hernández, 2018 Aug. 17) Thus, it seems that Hernández understands violence against women as a cultural issue, perhaps one perpetuated by misogyny, *machismo*, or toxic masculinity. While he does not discuss the source of this cultural violence in his speech, he shifts the conversation away from the responsibility of institutions and the state in eradicating structural impunity in Honduras. These sentiments are also embedded in Honduran law; Article 9 of the Law of Equal Opportunities for Women (2000) states that "the family, as the first area of socialization, transmission and learning of identity models, behaviors, attitudes and values, must become a space for generating equal rights and opportunities for its members." (República de Honduras, 2000)

Similar to that of former Guatemalan Vice President, Roxana Baldetti, and former First Lady, Hilda Patricia Marroquin de Morales, Hernández's rhetoric reinforces stereotypes of women in the private sphere, emphasizing that they are "natural born" caretakers. At the Inauguration of

Ciudad Mujer[23] in San Pedro Sula in November 2018, he said: "Thank you, women, for making life so pleasant, so happy, for being supportive, for also being patient, and now we are en route to changing Honduras." (Hernández, 2018 Nov. 22) Just months earlier, at an event for Women in Construction, he claimed, "Now, the vast majority of women are heads of household, and if they are going to create this Honduras of opportunities, we must start with those sectors [in which women do not make up] the same proportion as men." (Hernández, 2018 Dec. 6) In both of these statements, Hernández reinforces the stereotype that women are motherly caretakers in their households. On the one hand, he thanks women for being pleasant, happy, patient, and for being a support system to the people in their lives. He appreciates these women not for their social/economic/political contributions, but rather for the emotions they evoke and for what they can offer others. On the other hand, Hernández continuously speaks about women's contributions within the context of the home. This rhetoric appears yet again in Hernández's speech at the July 2019 Inauguration of Ciudad Mujer in La Ceiba:

> The mother of the family, who are largely heads of household,[24] play an important role in educating boys, girls, [solving] problems within the family because there is a lot of domestic violence, intrafamily violence . . . and that is a matter of principles and of values, of respecting each other, and that only happens at home, at school, at kindergarten, and Ciudad Mujer has to be an agent of change. (Hernández, 2019 July 17)

For one thing, Hernández clearly praises women's roles as mothers who are responsible for the socialization of their families. He places these responsibilities on the women themselves, claiming

[23] In 2016, the Honduran government replicated El Salvador's project of Ciudad Mujer. Similar to the Salvadoran version, Ciudad Mujer in Honduras is a network of government-funded centers that provide services to women in six areas: economic autonomy, sexual and reproductive health, protection of women's rights, attention to adolescent girls, community education, and childcare. Ciudad Mujer has since expanded to five centers across Honduras. (Ciudad Mujer Honduras, 2020)

[24] In his speech, Hernández does not clarify what he means by women serving as "heads of [their] household." Typically, being the head of one's household implies that a woman is a single mother and is generating the income for that household, which, in turn, suggests that she is working in some capacity.

that they must "properly" solve family problems and educate their sons and daughters so that future generations, in turn, can change social patterns of domestic and intrafamily violence. Broadly speaking, he lifts this "burden" off of the state as he imposes the teaching of values of respect on women and on schools. Additionally, Hernández employs an individualistic explanation of domestic violence. He clearly portrays it as an issue in the private, and not the public, sphere. In this instance, he draws no connection between violence in the two spheres, which would, in part, require him to acknowledge how the state's response to political dissenters and gangs has helped normalize domestic, intrafamily, and intimate partner violence.

Interviews

As mentioned in my methodological framework, I interviewed six representatives from women's organizations in Guatemala, two from Costa Rica, and one (over the phone) from El Salvador. Engaging in dialogue with these administrators, who dedicate their life's work to addressing gender-based violence and advancing the rights of women, taught me numerous things about how violence is understood in Central America. Topics that came up during interviews included patrimonial violence, religion, and political violence, all of which I will discuss here.

Patrimonial and Economic Violence

Several of the women I interviewed spoke about patrimonial violence, a concept that did not come up very often in my survey of the academic literature. Patrimonial violence is often equated with economic violence, which is defined as "acts that restrict women's ability to generate or control their own income or support their families." (Deere, Contreras, and Twyman, 2014, p. 144) Deere *et al.* (2014), however, make conceptual distinctions between the terms, noting that patrimonial violence "focuses on violations of women's property rights—their ability to own and manage the individual and joint property to which they are entitled." (p. 144) Drawing from

feminist economic theory, Deere *et al*. emphasize the harmful effects of patrimonial violence and explain that asset ownership can enhance women's "fallback" position, or how well off they would be if their marriage or relationship ended. (Agarwal, 1994, 1997; Deere and León, 2001; Katz, 1991; p. 145) Though women with financial or property assets are more likely to have the means with which to support themselves and their family in case of divorce or separation, their risk to physical violence from a partner or spouse also increases. (Deere *et al*., 2014, p. 146)

Though one of my informants spoke of patrimonial violence, her explanation more closely aligned with conceptualizations of economic violence, particularly with the notion of "women's [restricted] ability to generate or control their own income." (Deere *et al*., 2014, p. 144) Elena, an administrator from Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER in Costa Rica, illustrated the effects of economic violence in the following example from her life:

> I am a survivor of violence, of various types of violence, now that I think about it, right? About my father, let's say, at that time it was extremely difficult because my mother was 50 years old, perhaps, and she had no profession. Also [my father] was an academic, right? In other words, for me the issue of patrimonial violence was very obvious, very palpable, and emotional violence, of course, too. Sometimes we forget that this is something else. We cannot live with violence permanently.

Looking back, Elena notes that economic violence was not highly visible in her family, yet it was very present. Normative economic gender roles, which have historically set women up as homemakers and men as breadwinners, limited Elena's mother's ability to develop a profession, and therefore, generate and control her own income in the traditional sense. With this in mind, I recall former Guatemalan Vice President Roxana Baldetti's discourse in which she frequently brings up the significance of a woman's role in the family. Elena, in turn, provided a real life example of how these representations bore weight in her nuclear household: her father earned a prestigious position as an academic to maintain the family financially, while normative economic gender roles limited her mother's prospects. Because she never established a career for herself,

Elena's mother could not participate in the public labor force and exercise her economic autonomy in the public sphere.

In another interview, Adela, a FLACSO-Guatemala affiliated faculty member, commented on the types of violence against women that Guatemala's Law Against Femicide (2008) outlaws: "The femicide law here in Guatemala recognizes four types [of violence against women], which are physical violence (which is the most visible), psychological, sexual, and patrimonial or economic." As Adela highlights, the Guatemalan Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women (2008) places patrimonial and economic violence on the same plane. It broadens the definition to not only include the violation of a woman's property rights, as Deere *et al.* (2014) posit, but also of all her economic rights, including the ability to freely participate in the public labor sector with financial compensation and without discrimination or judgment. The Honduran Law Against Domestic Violence (1997) also groups these two concepts together. While most legislation in Guatemala and Honduras leaves out patrimonial violence, two laws in El Salvador specifically criminalize it: the Law Against Intrafamily Violence (1996) recognizes psychological, physical, sexual, and patrimonial violence, while the Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (2011) conceptually distinguishes economic (actions that limit, control, or prevent women's economic survival) and patrimonial violence (actions that destroy, harm, limit, or retain objects, personal documents, valuables, and patrimonial rights).

Religion

Discussions of women's social roles also came up repeatedly throughout several interviews, especially in regard to religion. In Guatemala, approximately 58.2 percent of the population is Catholic and 35.6 percent is Protestant. (Pew Research Center, 2010a) In El Salvador, roughly 51.1 percent of the population is Catholic and 35.7 percent is Protestant. (Pew Research

Center, 2010b) In Honduras, about 50.3 percent of the population is Catholic and 36.6 percent is Protestant. (Pew Research Center, 2010c) As previously mentioned in my discourse analysis, political leaders, such as Guatemalan former president Jimmy Morales, have very openly integrated Christian values into their political platforms and discourse, condemning abortion and upholding a heteronormative nuclear family unit as the basis of society. In my interviews, several informants claimed religion perpetuates everyday violence in the lives of women. Isabel, an administrator from Fundación Sobrevivientes, made the important observation that religious principles create certain expectations of a woman's behavior and also place them at risk of becoming trapped in abusive relationships:

> [Women] who have been educated to be subdued, that is, to be submissive, become much more vulnerable. They have been told not to raise their voice, they must do what they are told. The subject of tradition and, sometimes, the very traditional and closed-minded thoughts we can have. And here the subject of religion has been immersed, which weighs heavily when making the decision of whether to leave that circle of violence or stay. Especially the issue of religious marriage. In our countries, it is a very difficult thing for many women to break it off.

In this excerpt from our interview, Isabel highlights the importance of religion in making or breaking cycles of violence. More specifically, she notes this within the bounds of marriage. On several occasions, the Bible condemns divorce and separation: "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Mark 10:9, English Standard Version Bible) These religious principles, consequently, weigh heavily in many women's decision to stay in abusive relationships.[25]

[25] In Guatemala, divorce has been legalized since at least 1963, when the country's first Civil Code went into effect. It is, however, permissible only under certain conditions (see República de Guatemala, 1963). Article 154 of the 1963 Civil Code claims that separation and divorce may be declared by mutual agreement of spouses or by the will of one spouse through a determined cause.

Religion also contributes to constructions and expectations of women as obedient, dutiful wives. The Bible, for instance, sets up images of women who subject to their husbands: "Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct . . . For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands." (1 Peter 3:1-5) Isabel notes that in countries like Guatemala, where approximately 90 percent of the population practices a Christian-based faith, defying religious law poses social and religious consequences. Thus, religious doctrine plays a crucial role when women are faced with the decision of remaining in or leaving an abusive relationship. This is important to take note of within a greater context, especially looking at the role of the state. In the case of Guatemala, politicians like Jimmy Morales have vehemently integrated religious principles into their political platform. By openly endorsing these values in discourse, state representatives arguably pressure civil society to live in accordance with them. Anyone who does not act so is, therefore, deemed unworthy of God and the state's protection.

Religious principles also construct ideas of pain and suffering that, arguably, contribute to the naturalization and normalization of violence in everyday life. This became a talking point in my interview with María, an administrator in the Observatorio en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva in Guatemala City:

> There is a structure that tells you the woman is submissive; the woman must obey within religiosity. I mean, here I live in hell, but later when I die, I will go to heaven. Which is what many sell you. Here they offer you suffering, but in the afterlife, you will be happy. That accommodation, I would say, could even be a mental accommodation. In other words, the burden of suffering from violence and poverty is so great that you lose, as I understand it, you lose hope. And then you no longer see how your life goes day by day and, of course, you internalize and accept as reality that you cannot change the fact of violence.

The Bible speaks often about suffering, portraying it as a price to pay while we await to join God in Heaven. In one such case, the religious text says: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18) In affirming that suffering is a natural and necessary part of life, Christian doctrine influences the ways in which women understand the situations of violence they find themselves in. María argues that it is these perceptions of suffering during our lifetime that encourage women to internalize the violence in their daily lives. Consequently, they run the risk of accepting that there is nothing they can do to stop violence. This is further propelled by the state itself, as politicians uphold a conservative agenda at the expense of the rights of women.

Gloria, an administrator from Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres, also noted that religion, as a mechanism and institution, can lead to symbolic and direct violence:

> **G**: Religion also greatly affects and conditions women to accept such violence in their lives . . . There is a very strong Latin American current of religious fundamentalism that is tucked into the lives of women, and that is a serious obstacle for women in all territories because women have no self-determination over their right to fully exercise their human rights . . . Religions are putting at the center, or rather allowing, symbolic and direct violence. In the symbolic [sense], consider, recently, a priest from Costa Rica [who] pronounced the situation of rape of girls as if it is permissible. They are permissible to these situations but not to respect the integrity and decisions of women.[26]
>
> **L**: And direct violence? What would the connection be with religion?
>
> **G**: Well, there are pastors, priests, and hierarchical members of the Church who still abuse girls in performing their duty. They grope them, rape them, touch them, right? And since they are in confession, right, using the mechanism of the Church, they are told to shut up, to say nothing, or they will kill them. The rapists are telling them that. The one who should protect you—because they are supposed to be protective figures—is using male power and religious power to oppress women.

[26] At the time of our interview, it did not occur to me to ask Gloria for the Costa Rican priest's name. However, after doing some brief research, I believe she may have been referring to Mauricio Antonio Viquez Lizano. Police captured and arrested him in Mexico just days before our interview.

Gloria claims that the Catholic Church generates direct and symbolic violence. To clarify her point, she highlights the many claims of sexual abuse that have emerged against religious figures across Latin America, noting the example of a priest from Costa Rica. As Gloria notes, how could these individuals be sexually or physically violent if they are members of the Church? Who will believe that a priest would go against God's word and harm someone? Their purpose is to serve and protect the community through religious doctrine. Instead, however, they exploit their elevated social and moral status to commit these crimes. Their moral compass often goes unquestioned, placing their victims against the odds when they come forward with accusations.

Political Violence

Religion is also very much tied into electoral and political violence. Likely due to the fact that I arrived in Guatemala in the recent aftermath of a presidential election (in which one of the principal candidates was a woman), my interviewees had much to say about political violence and its effects on women. Mostly in the case of Guatemala, but also to a certain extent in Costa Rica, informants noted that female politicians are portrayed differently in the media, on social media, and in religious discourse. At the time of our interview in August 2019, Adela—a FLACSO-Guatemala faculty member—shared with me a recently published newspaper column from Guatemala's *Nuestro Diario* titled "¿Tendremos 'presidenta'?" (Will we have a 'female president'?), written by Arnulfo Chapas Pérez. In this column, Chapas Pérez writes the following about Sandra Torres, a female candidate representing the National Unity of Hope party in the August 2019 runoff presidential election: "If a woman were to govern us, it is our, the men's, fault . . . That a woman assumes a presidential command is not natural, since morally, men cannot be under the order or ordering of a woman. The leadership was conferred by God on men and that principle is natural, it cannot be violated." (Chapas Pérez, 2019 Aug. 5) Representations that depict

women as unfit to take on positions of public influence also come up in official discourse; politicians consistently emphasize and praise women's social role within the family, further contributing to the naturalization of women's roles in the private sphere (i.e. the household) and their stigmatization in the public realm. These portrayals, in turn, shed light on María's argument that women internalize the conditions of their lives, such as poverty and violence, and therefore do not act on them in part due to social, political, and religious values that naturalize beliefs of women's subordination and suffering.

Questions of religion also surface when looking into the name-calling habits that emerged during the 2019 electoral campaign in Guatemala. Name-calling became a running gag on social media, appearing in Facebook posts and YouTube videos. While the public often called the winning candidate, Alejandro Giammattei, a liar, they also consistently labelled Sandra Torres a witch across different platforms. Witches are generally associated with evil and sorcery, both of which are strongly condemned in Judeo-Christian faiths. In proclaiming her a witch, Torres' critics not only questioned her moral character within the political realm, but also in all spheres of life. During our interview, Gloria, from Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres, also noted that social media users criticized Torres for being perverse and evil, thus creating a stigma around women who transgress social roles dictated by Christian doctrine. The relevance of this to the greater picture, however, is that if women are not accepted and respected in the public sphere, how can laws designed to protect them truly be on their side?[27]

Other topics that came up in most of my interviews include: structural violence, women's sexual and reproductive rights, everyday violence, gangs, organized crime, and narco-trafficking, and historical legacies of state violence. In the following chapter, I situate these findings from my

[27] I speak further about this in the Political Violence sub-section of my Discussion section.

interviews within the violence triangle (Galtung, 1969, 1990) and multisided violence (Menjívar, 2008, 2011; Menjívar and Walsh, 2017; Walsh and Menjívar, 2016a) conceptual frameworks.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In my survey of the literature on feminicide and other forms of gender-based violence in Central America, I grouped the readings by the following themes: cultural and symbolic violence, political and legal violence, and structural and economic violence (Galtung, 1969, 1990; Menjívar, 2008, 2011). Reviewing the literature prompted me to understand that violence is a multisided issue, which involves direct (clearly recognizable) and invisibilized forms (Galtung, 1969, 1990; Scheper-Hughes, 1992, 1996; Bourgois, 2001; Bourdieu, 2004; Menjívar, 2008, 2011; Walsh and Menjívar, 2016a). In my discussion, I use two theoretical frameworks to respond to my research question: Galtung's (1969, 1990) violence triangle and Menjívar's (2008, 2011) multisided violence. (see also Walsh and Menjívar, 2016a, 2016b; Menjívar and Walsh, 2017)

Galtung's (1969, 1990) violence triangle framework understands violence as being composed of direct, structural, and cultural forces. The violence triangle dynamically explains how direct, structural, and cultural violence build off of one another, and how these shift (yet, also remain the same) depending on spatial-temporal contexts:

> When the triangle is stood on its 'direct' and 'structural violence' feet, the image invoked is cultural violence as the legitimizer of both. Standing the triangle on its 'direct violence' head yields the image of structural and cultural sources of direct violence. Of course, the triangle always remains a triangle – but the image produced is different, and all six positions (three pointing downward, three upward) invoke somewhat different stories, all worth telling. Despite the symmetries there is a basic difference in the time relation of the three concepts of violence. Direct violence is an *event*; structural violence is a *process* with ups and downs; cultural violence is an *invariant*, a 'permanence' remaining essentially the same for long periods . . . The three forms of violence enter time differently, somewhat like the difference in earthquake theory between the earthquake as an event, the movement of the tectonic plates as a process and the fault line as a more permanent condition. (Galtung, 1990, p. 294)

The image of the violence triangle itself critically informs the dynamic and spatial-temporal complexity of Galtung's theoretical approach to violence. In his groundbreaking work, Galtung coined the terms structural and cultural violence to shed light on the "invisible" violence in the lives of people that breed conditions for direct (more recognizable) forms. Galtung's conceptualization of structural violence, and to a certain extent, cultural violence, constitute theoretical pillars in Menjívar's (2008, 2011) multisided violence framework.[28]

Menjívar (2008, 2011) inductively developed the multisided violence framework of analysis to examine the multifaceted character of this phenomenon and its expression in the quotidian lives of Ladina (non-Indigenous) women in eastern Guatemala. Similar to Galtung's violence triangle, the multisided violence theoretical framework accounts for physical and observable violence, in addition to more "invisible," everyday forms. Menjívar's framework diverges from Galtung's in that it employs numerous lenses to explore the multisided nature of violence, including structural violence, political violence and state terror, everyday violence, interpersonal violence, and crime, symbolic violence and the internalization of inequality, and gender and gendered violence. In their work on legal tolls and persistent impunity for feminicide in Guatemala, Walsh and Menjívar (2016b) adapt the multisided violence framework to also include legal violence. All of these lenses, in conjunction with one another, explore how structural and gender inequalities become internalized and often go undetected in everyday expressions of life, such as marital unions, motherhood, women's work, and religion. I use Menjívar's multisided theoretical framework to note, as Walsh and Menjívar (2016a) claim, how various forms of

[28] Menjívar (2011) moves away from the concept of cultural violence because, she argues, it presents an individualistic account and understanding of violence. Instead, she uses Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, which encapsulates—but also goes beyond—certain aspects of Galtung's cultural violence.

violence influence the ways in which "individuals interpret the laws . . . how they view violence in the lives of women, [as well as] how women view themselves" and the conditions in which they live. (p. 588)

Structural Violence

A major pillar in Galtung's violence triangle and Menjívar's multisided violence frameworks, structural violence plays a crucial role in the implementation of policies on the ground in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Structural violence, as Galtung argues, is often invisibilized and does not leave direct marks or inflict physical pain; yet, it is just as harmful as direct violence. In the context of policy in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, structural violence arguably impedes women's access to systems of justice accorded to them under the law. Factors such as poverty, education, language, and geography can serve as barriers to women who wish to report crimes committed against them and/or inform themselves of the rights and protections granted to them under the law.

The ways in which structural violence—or any other form of violence, for that matter—affects Central American women may best be understood through an intersectional lens. (Crenshaw, 1991) Intersectional analyses of violence are perhaps better visualized as a "dreadful mosaic" (Speed, 2014, 2019), rather than as a continuum of violence (Kelly, 1987; Sev'er, 1999; Moser, 2001; Cockburn, 2004; Giles and Hyndman, 2004). As Speed (2014) notes, the continuum of violence "group[s] all women together and [does] not [account] for the ways that other aspects of women's lives—their race, their class, their immigration or disability status—render them more vulnerable than other women." (p. 2) On the other hand, Speed posits that visualizing gender violence as a dreadful mosaic has the "benefit of highlighting that each individual shard, like each form of oppression or violence, with its own sharp-edged and jagged contours, is always part of a

much larger social assemblage that defines it meaning." (2014, p. 10) This re-conceptualization of the continuum conveys how different forms of violence and intersections of race, class, gender, age, and disability status interact at all times to constitute a greater picture. Arguably, structural violence further predisposes women of certain racial or class backgrounds to physical and symbolic forms of violence. Though laws have been created to prevent, sanction, and eradicate gender-based violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, most of them do not integrate an intersectional framework that acknowledges the ways in which race, class, or other vectors interfere with women's access to justice. Lawmakers, Bellino (2010) argues, "[assume] that women have equal access to justice, though systems of corruption, discrimination, and poverty limit the level of engagement that a woman . . . can have with state institutions." (p. 8–9) For instance, women trapped in conditions of poverty face additional barriers to education or economic autonomy, tools that would likely afford them greater access to and knowledge of the law and justice systems.

Other structural barriers that women face include language and geography. In Guatemala, language is especially salient, as over 40% of the population identifies as Indigenous. (IWGIA, 2019) Judicial systems in Guatemala rarely offer bilingual support, thus reinforcing ethno-racial hierarchies. Because most state institutions operate in Spanish, speakers of Indigenous languages often find themselves with little or no resources when it comes to seeking legal redress. In the best case scenario, they must rely on the state to find them a translator. Geographic factors are just as important when it comes to structural violence; impoverished women living in remote rural areas are likely required to go to greater lengths to report a crime than those in urban centers.[29]

[29] Because I did not travel to rural areas in Guatemala, El Salvador, or Honduras, I draw these conclusions from a qualitative study on the role of walking and waiting in the lives of women enrolled in a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program in rural areas of Peru. (Cookson, 2018) In

Impoverished women who live far from a police station or court must walk or commute long distances to report/prosecute their perpetrators, which may discourage them from doing so in the first place. In addition to walking, women also wait for, as Cookson (2018) notes, "attention from bureaucrats, and for politicians to fulfill promises." (p. 76) Asking rural women to go far out of their way to report a crime or to access systems of social support and justice allows the state to control how women spend their time, contributing to "time poverty." (Antonopoulos and Hirway, 2010; Cookson, 2018) Women are thus expected to spend their own time (and money) if they wish to hold their perpetrator accountable in the courts, as their report purportedly poses an "inconvenience" to the system. Impoverished Indigenous, Afro-descended, and Afro-Indigenous women in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, therefore, face additional barriers to systems of support and justice than middle- or upper-class non-Indigenous women in urban areas.

It is also essential to note that, as Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) argue and Speed (2014) reminds us, "gender inequality itself is modified by its intersection with other systems of power and oppression." (p. 43; p. 6) This can be clearly observed in the lives of Indigenous K'iche, K'anjob'al, Mam, Q'eqchi, Ixil, Kaqchikel, and Chuj women who demanded reparations and justice for human rights violations that took place during the Guatemalan civil conflict. (Fulchirone *et al*., 2011) Though these women demanded legal redress, the state's failure to fully prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity posed a major barrier. In 2013, General Efraín Ríos Montt was put on trial for genocide and crimes against humanity; the courts found him guilty and sentenced him to eighty years in prison. However, a Constitutional Court annulled the decision just ten days later on the grounds of "procedural irregularities." (Sanford, Álvarez-Arenas, and

---

the case of Peru, many impoverished, Indigenous women must walk days on end to their district capital to present proof that they are meeting program conditions and to collect their CCT checks.

Dill, 2016) Drawing from this example, racialized and gendered hierarchies of power help drive systems of corruption and impunity. In turn, as Farmer (2004) claims, structures of inequality are sustained by the state's complicity in erasing "history and cover[ing] up the clear links between the dead and near-dead and those who are the winners in the struggle for survival." (p. 307) In post-war Guatemala, Indigenous women (and men) continue to experience structural, symbolic, and legal forms of violence that aim to discredit and erase their lived experiences and histories, and which further enable structures that are purportedly "nobody's fault." (Farmer, 2004, p. 307) The legal and judicial system is structured to support middle- or upper-class, European, Anglo-American, and mestizo heterosexual, cisgender men, thus ostracizing and marginalizing racial and gendered "Others." (Razack, 2000) Racial, class, and gender hierarchies are embedded in the social and institutional fabric in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, which ultimately affect the resources and pathways to justice that women have. I do not, however, wish to claim that poverty is a cause of violence; rather, it poses structural barriers to women attempting to gain equal access to systems of justice. This point came up in my interview with Marta and Paula, two administrators from CODEFEM, when I asked if they believe poverty affects the implementation of policies on gender-based violence:

> **M**: Poverty…
> **P**: Aggravates the lives of women, I think?
> **M**: Aggravates the lives of women and *access* to justice. That's the problem. Because justice is centralized.
> **P**: Many people think that violence is related to alcohol and poverty. That is justifying violence.

Thus, while poverty is not a cause of violence, Menjívar and Walsh (2017) argue that "it puts poor women at extreme risk for repeated victimization and at a disadvantage in exercising their citizenship rights." (p. 224)

Structural, Economic, and Patrimonial Violence

Economic, patrimonial, and structural violence also go hand in hand. While patrimonial violence, broadly speaking, is the "violation of women's property rights," Deere *et al.* (2014) highlight that economic violence consists of "acts that restrict women's ability to generate or control their own income or support their families." Drawing once again from my interview with Elena, —from Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER in Costa Rica—her mother never developed a career, while her father was an esteemed academic scholar. Thus, while Elena's father took on the role of economic head of household, her mother did not have the opportunity to develop a career and generate an income in the traditional sense. Normative gender expectations that emerge from patriarchal religions have helped dictate the spheres in which women are welcome and accepted, and in which ones they are not. This severely limits women's ability to participate freely and without judgment in the public sector and in the political economy.

On the other hand, for those women who have gone to work in the "public" sphere (as vendors, domestic employees, and operators in *maquilas*, for instance), globalization and neoliberalism have led to systemic trends of inequality that exploit women and their labor, hence contributing to the myth of the "disposable third world woman," who is discarded and replaced once she becomes "industrial waste." (Wright, 2006, p. 2) Though neoliberalism has arguably further opened up the public labor force for women, Walsh and Menjívar (2016a) claim it counterintuitively generates precarious work conditions, "limit[ing] women's economic opportunities and mak[ing] them more vulnerable and dependent on their partners for survival." (p. 589) In this context, it could be argued that neoliberal economic systems institute a hierarchy of patriarchal power that exploits women's bodies as sources of cheap, disposable labor. To draw this back into conversation with the implementation of policies and women's access to systems of

justice, neoliberalism commoditizes women's bodies and places them at further risk of violence in the workplace and household. Ultimately, it has shifted the conversation away from the rights and compensation of workers, towards the maximization of profitability. These processes have, as Federici (2004) notes, required the "transformation of the body into a work-machine, and the subjugation of women to the reproduction of the work-force." (p. 63) Corporations survive at the expense of their workers, violating women's ability to freely and safely exercise their economic rights and autonomy. In the case of Honduras, the 2009 military coup d'état also had structural implications on women's labor. Ronderos (2011) observed that many women who refused to support and march in favor of the de facto government lost their jobs as textile workers in *maquilas*, while those "working in the maquilas still operating after the global economic crisis [faced] longer hours to make up for the time lost during the protests." (p. 321) State repression and violence also forced many street vendors out of work.

Cultural and Symbolic Violence

Questions of cultural and symbolic violence also appear in the violence triangle and multisided violence frameworks. Galtung (1990) uses the term "cultural violence," which he defines as "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence—exemplified by religion and ideology, language, and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics)—that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence." (p. 291) Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power and violence builds off of Galtung's cultural violence, as it claims that "the dominated apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural." (2004, p. 229) Unlike physical or direct forms, symbolic violence can be difficult to identify and recognize due in part to its naturalization in the everyday lives of people. Bourdieu's symbolic violence elucidates how structures of sociocultural

domination, such as gendered violence, are "'*product[s] of an incessant (and therefore historical) labour of reproduction*' to which singular agents . . . and institutions – families, the church, the educational system, the state – contribute." (2004, p. 339) Symbolic violence takes shape in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras through political figures' fixation on heteropatriarchal constructions of women's social roles and the family unit. As Bourdieu notes, symbolic power is propelled by numerous sociopolitical actors working hand in hand, such as the church, state, educational system, and of course, family. Political figures in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have continuously spoken in favor of women's roles within the family and condemned those who step outside these boundaries. Take, for instance, former Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales, who condemned abortion by saying that he will always be in favor of life, family, and marriage, or Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández who emphasized the important role of women in educating their children and solving problems within the family.[30]

Symbolic violence comes into play in the representation of crimes against women as "crimes of passion" or "products of jealousy" in official discourse, as seen when Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele labelled the murder of Keni Guadalupe Larios a "feminicide of passion" in a July 2019 Tweet. These representations are highly dismissive of the magnitude of these crimes and naturalize them as part of everyday life. They also help shape the narrative that a woman must have done something wrong, offensive, or harmful to prompt her partner to react with such rage. Lastly, "crimes of passion" suggest that an aggressor committed the crime because of a personal, rather than a public, problem. This, in turn, relegates the crime away from being a public safety concern that the state must address, investigate, and respond to. These representations also

[30] Hernández's original words are: "The mother of the family, who are largely heads of household, play an important role in educating boys and girls, to solve problems within the family because there is a lot of domestic violence, intrafamily violence."

illustrate how politics and religion build off of one another to push forward normative gender expectations that deem dutiful mothers and wives the most righteous and "worthy" women. In turn, women who step outside of those boundaries must be, as Bellino (2010) claims, "put back in their (domestic) place." In Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, women's corpses not only frequently show evidence of rape, but also of over-kill, which Carey and Torres (2010) affirm is "murder and torture that exceeds the force necessary to terminate life." (p. 156) Women's bodies often bear gruesome and excessive signs of torture, such as mutilation and dismemberment. In Honduras, Kennedy (2005) notes that the naked and tortured bodies of women have been found with "their legs open as a demonstration of male power." (Prieto-Carrón *et al.*, 2007, p. 26) These patterns of over-kill suggest that women are punished more forcefully for deviating from gender boundaries than men because, Carey and Torres (2010) argue, the "moral costs of defilement [are] greater." (p. 157)

Normative Gender Social Roles

Women's social roles in the family and in Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Honduran society came up time and time again in interviews, as well. Paula, an administrator in CODEFEM in Guatemala City, notes that women's social roles are a "common thread" in violence: "Violence has a common thread. And that [common thread] is how women are viewed. In other words, they have given us the role of the family, the role that we are going to grow, get married, have children, and take care of them. And they don't see us in another role." Paula observes that the way in which Guatemalan society constructs women's social roles as obedient wives and mothers helps justify acts of violence against those who overstep these bounds. Yet, just as these social roles contribute to cycles of violence against women, one could argue that acts of violence also help reinforce women's gender roles. Processes of gendered violence, Menjívar and Walsh (2017) note,

"reinforce and normalize expectations of gendered behavior . . . [their] imprint can be seen in the routinized daily acts of control, humiliations, and stigmatization of women and their bodies." (p. 224–225) This becomes especially salient when redirecting our thoughts back to discussions of economic and patrimonial violence, which I argue are subcategories of both structural and symbolic violence. Restricting women's right to property—as Deere *et al*. (2014) posit—and economic autonomy depend on women to conform to certain subordinate social roles. Connections between symbolic violence and economic violence can be, once again, clearly seen in Elena's, from Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER in Costa Rica, example of her mother never developing a career for herself and her father becoming an established academic scholar. Though the reasons for this are manifold, they can likely be traced back to the social roles that Elena's mother and father were expected to fill in their family as homemaker and breadwinner, respectively. Thus, economic violence links to symbolic violence because it builds off of the "natural" social roles that women are expected to take on: mother, wife, homemaker, and caretaker.

Symbolic and structural violence also go hand in hand. Drawing from a stratified sample of 800 people in San Salvador in 1980, Martín-Baró observed that Salvadorans who identify as religious and have fewer years of schooling are more likely to hold rather "conservative" images of women, the family and the social order. (2016, p. 234)[31] Drawing from Stevens' concept of *marianismo* (1973), Martín-Baró develops the term *hembrismo*, to encapsulate the following "conservative" ideologies: a) family confinement (the woman is for the home), b) pre-matrimonial

[31] Ignacio Martín-Baró was a Spanish Jesuit priest, philosopher, and scholar. In 1989, Salvadoran Armed Forces assassinated him in his residence at the José Simeón Cañas Universidad de Centroamérica (UCA) in San Salvador. Five other Jesuit priests (Armando López Quintana, Ignacio Ellacuría, Segundo Montes Mozo, Joaquin López y López and Juan Ramón Moreno Pardo) also died in the massacre, as well as a cook at the residence, Julia Elba Ramos, and her teenage daughter, Celina Mariceth Ramos.

virginity, c) fidelity and total submission to men, d) great sweetness and devotion, and e) traditional morality and religiosity.[32] (2016, p. 238) In his survey, Martín-Baró finds that respondents with secondary and university levels of education identified as less religious than those with primary levels. (2016, p. 247) Consequently, most respondents with higher levels of education did not agree with the values underlined in *hembrismo*, while those with primary levels (or less) agreed more frequently. Thus, Martín-Baró's study helps clarify the ways in which structural and symbolic violence often overlap: structural conditions pose barriers to working class people in gaining access to education, which in turn helps contribute to their internalization of the religious status quo.[33]

Religion, Politics, and Women's Reproductive Rights

Religion and its influence on social constructions of women's roles have also contributed to the stigmatization and control of women's bodies, as evidenced by political attitudes toward abortion in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Both El Salvador and Honduras currently have absolute bans on abortion and emergency contraception, including in cases of rape, incest, or when the mother's life is at risk. (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2016) Originally adopted in 1983 and amended in 2008, the Honduran Penal Code criminalizes abortion, defining it as the death of a human being at any stage of pregnancy or during childbirth.[34] It delineates punishments for those

[32] I place the term "conservative" in quotation marks because this is the term that Martín-Baró uses in his study.

[33] See section on Everyday Violence for more on the internalization of socio-economic-political-symbolic conditions.

[34] The original Honduran Penal Code of 1983 did not absolutely ban abortion. Article 131 allowed abortions performed by a doctor with the consent of the woman under the following circumstances: if the woman's life was in danger/the woman's health was seriously threatened by the pregnancy process or if the fetus was potentially "defective." (República de Honduras, 1983) Abortion was later absolutely banned in 1985, when Decree 13-85 repealed Article 131.

who intentionally cause an abortion, such as: 3 to 6 years of prison if a woman consents to it, 6 to 8 years if an agent does the procedure without the mother's consent and without violence or intimidation, and 8 to 10 years if an agent does the procedure with violence, intimidation, and/or deception. (Poder Judicial de Honduras, 2008) The Honduran Congress refused to amend the total abortion ban when adopting a new Penal Code in 2017, thus allowing for the continued criminalization of abortion under any and all circumstances. (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2017) In El Salvador, Articles 133–137 of the 1998 Penal Code criminalize abortions done with consent and/or by the woman herself (punishable by 2 to 8 years in prison), abortions done without consent (punishable by 4 to 10 years), aggravated abortion (done by a doctor, pharmacist, or other medical professional and punishable by 6 to 12 years), induced or assisted abortion (5 years), and negligent abortion (6 months to 2 years).[35] (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2020a) Articles 133–140 of the Guatemalan Penal Code, originally adopted in 1973, are somewhat laxer than those of El Salvador and Honduras. (República de Guatemala, 1973) I use the term lax, however, with caution. Since the Penal Code of 1973, all forms of abortion have remained punishable by law in Guatemala, with the exceptions of negligent abortions and therapeutic abortions, which would constitute a procedure done for the "sole purpose of preventing duly established danger to the life of the mother *after* exhausting all scientific and technical means." (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2020b; emphasis added)

[35] Abortion has been criminalized in El Salvador since its first Penal Code of 1826. However, for the first time in Salvadoran legislation, the Penal Code of 1973 de-criminalized abortion in the following cases: if the woman's life was in danger and abortion was the only means to save her life, if the pregnancy was a consequence of rape or statutory rape, or if it was detected that the fetus had a serious malformation or congenital disorder. Abortion was, once again, absolutely banned with the adoption of the Penal Code of 1998. (Guardado, 2014)

Political banter in El Salvador has historically condemned abortion for breaking the laws of God and the family unit. In fact, these have been key campaign strategies for political candidates from the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), a right-wing conservative political party, against candidates from the left-wing Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) party. Prior to the victory of FMLN candidate Mauricio Funes in 2009, ARENA candidates claimed the FMLN's socialist agenda entailed the "destruction of the family unit . . . [and] would legalize the slaughter of innocent unborn children, which is clearly against the laws of the Catholic Church, God, and Salvadoran values." (ARENA, 2004; Viterna, 2012, p. 252) This political rhetoric not only sets up the heteropatriarchal family unit as the foundation of society, but it also indicates that Salvadoran national values are one and the same with those of the Catholic Church. Biroli and Caminotti (2020) highlight these patterns, as they note how conservative and right-wing political strategies in Latin America have rallied against "gender ideology," setting it up as a threat to the family, children, marriage, the "natural order," and national values. (p. 3) These themes also became relevant during my interview with Marta, an administrator from CODEFEM, who said:

> Religion has affected all parts [of Guatemala]. That is why it is understood that women are guilty. Political discourse has criminalized gender theory. To deputies, presidency, that was all the discourse. Gender theory is pro-abortion, dismantling families, being promiscuous, lesbians. They tie in the religious issue with the fundamentalists of the United States. Misogyny, xenophobia, and racism continue to be fomented.

The ecclesiastical connection between the Church and State in El Salvador, in turn, exerts symbolic and direct violence on the bodies of women. It is symbolic in that the Catholic State upholds and praises women who satisfy certain religious social roles, such as obedient wives and dutiful mothers. Any woman who transgresses this role by having an abortion goes against the Church and the state's values and is therefore, as Marta exemplified, a home wrecker, promiscuous, and/or a lesbian. This once again brings me to the concept of *marianismo* (Stevens, 1973); women who

conform to the social norm are deemed pure, honest, and virginal, while those who "overstep their boundaries" are evil, vile, and ruthless whores. At the same time, the total abortion ban in El Salvador and Honduras (and to a certain extent, the partial ban in Guatemala) exerts direct violence on the bodies of women, forcing them to endure life-threatening pregnancies or painful complications from illegal home abortions. In El Salvador, Viterna (2012) observes, abortion laws have been "enforced so strictly that public hospital doctors refuse to operate on women who have ectopic pregnancies until they can confirm that the embryo has no heartbeat, or until the woman's fallopian tubes explode." (p. 252)

Direct and State Violence

Galtung defines violence as the "cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is," illustrating his argument with the following example: If a patient died of tuberculosis in the eighteenth century, it would not be considered violence because it was unavoidable at the time. If a patient died of the same disease in the present day, despite all of the medical resources that exist, this could be considered violence. (1969, p. 168) Thus, when the actual is unavoidable, it is not considered violence; yet, "when the potential is higher than the actual is by definition *avoidable* and when it is avoidable, then violence is present." (Galtung, 1969, p. 169) Galtung's conceptualization of violence becomes salient in his definition of direct violence: "when a war is fought there is direct violence since killing or hurting a person certainly puts his 'actual somatic realization' below his 'potential somatic realization'" (1969, p. 169).

Following an analysis of the data I collected through interviews, I observed that discussions of direct violence came up most prominently in relation to violence exercised at the hands of the state. In Guatemala, the thirty-six-year long internal armed conflict inevitably became part of the

conversation on violence against women. When I asked if she saw any connections between violence against women in the past three decades and in the present day, Marta from CODEFEM said the following:

> **L**: Do you see connections between feminicides 20,30 years ago and feminicides today?
> **M**: Oh no, those are very different things.
> **L**: Yes, but do you see any connections? Not that they are the same, but that there are systems that have been maintained for a long time and that have allowed feminicide and violence against women?
> **M**: Oh, well, it continues to strengthen the hatred of women. Also [the notion of women] as spoils of war. Rape… Rape… Rape…
> **L**: Was very systematic?
> **M**: It was systematic and it still is.

Marta notes that feminicides committed in the past and present are very distinct, invoking the notion that women became "spoils of war" during the civil conflict. As Menjívar (2018) argues, though "conditions of violence then and now are similar, they arise from different configurations of power and actors; today, new actors, such as organized criminal networks and gangs, play a central role." Differences can also be observed in the motives for these crimes. As I will discuss shortly, during the civil conflict, the Guatemalan state systematically targeted Indigenous women for their reproductive ability to give life to future guerillas. Today, women are, in large part, targeted for what seems to be quite the opposite: failing to conform to normative gender expectations as obedient, virtuous wives and mothers.

Sexual violence and torture against women (and men) became tactics of repression during the Guatemalan internal armed conflict. Sanford (2008) argues these tools have also become characteristic of feminicide in the present. Women's bodies, therefore, transformed into important sites of war starting with the civil conflict (Ertürk, 2009). This "new type of war" is based on the systematic elimination of a "human type," which anthropologist Rita Laura Segato terms *femigenocide*:

> Gender aggressions in the new types of war, trafficking of persons reduced to conditions of concentration, and the abandonment and undernutrition of girls and female babies in Asian countries, among others. These types of feminicides . . . are similar in their dimensions to the category 'genocide' for their aggressions against women with the intent of lethality and physical deterioration in contexts of impersonality . . . victims are also victims because they belong to a social collective, in this case, gender. (2014, p. 365)

Segato argues that women are systematically targeted through lethal acts of femigenocide that cause physical deterioration and harm to their bodies, in part, because they belong to a gendered social collective. In the case of the civil conflict, she notes that the Guatemalan state disintegrated community solidarity and the social fabric by subjecting Indigenous Maya women to systematic rape that stigmatized their bodies. (2014, p. 348) The state justified these acts, Sanford *et al*. (2016) note, by casting Maya women as "enemy 'property' deserving cruel destruction." (p. 40) The government thus classified women as enemies of the state and targeted them with sexual violence to undermine their biological and socioeconomic reproductive capabilities. Using mutilation, rape, and murder, counterinsurgents ensured that women could not become mothers to "future guerillas."[36] Sexual violence was, therefore, used to destabilize the reproductive capacities of women, as evidenced by the testimony of a 57-year-old Indigenous woman survivor in Chicabracán: "A soldier barged into my house. At that time I was pregnant with my son. He abused me. As a result of the rape my child was born handicapped." (Villanueva, 2019) Another survivor, 69-year-old María, testified that she and her children hid in the mountains to escape routine state violence. Because they had little food while in hiding, María lost her two children. (Villanueva, 2019) Though soldiers did not explicitly kill María's family, the structural conditions they were pushed into—undernourishment and extreme poverty—ultimately took the lives of her children.

[36] These sentiments were not unique to Guatemala; in El Salvador, Stephen (1995) argues, Indigenous communities "had one identity [to the military, various security police units, and many branches of the state]—that of subversives who were a threat to national security and to the capitalist modernization process." (p. 808)

Given these extreme forms of repression, women could not exercise economic sovereignty, perform domestic work, and/or reproduce, thus diminishing the "enemy's" capacity to survive.

Additionally, Goett (2017) claims that the systematic use of sexual violence "signals a colonial logic that eroticizes military occupation and political domination . . . racial and sexual advantage fuels a 'cult of imperial masculinity' in which hierarchy feels sexually satisfying and politically empowering for occupying forces." (p. 164–166) The eroticization of military occupation highlights how soldiers used acts of sexual violence to reaffirm gender, race, and class hierarchies. By imposing their "sexual advantage" on women, military soldiers asserted their gender and racial superiority over the "inferior" women they sexually abused and/or murdered. This builds off of, as Goett (2017) states, a "colonial logic" in which infringing the bodily autonomy of racial and gendered "Others" (Razack, 2000) reinforces the dominance of the colonizer and inferiority of the colonized. The violence exercised against women during the Guatemalan internal armed conflict and through historical processes of settler colonialism, however, is not merely a relic of the past. As Sanford (2008) claims, it continues to affect feminicide and sexual violence against women today.

The Honduran state also practiced sexual violence against women during and following the 2009 military coup d'état.[37] Menjívar and Walsh (2017) assert this point as they draw on a qualitative study that Gervais and Estévez (2011) conducted at a community education center in north central Honduras; this study featured women's testimonies of sexual and direct violence against social activists: "Post-coup related sexual assaults . . . included groping and beatings of breasts and vaginas, threats of sexual violence, intimidation tactics with explicit sexist insults, as well as gang rapes by soldiers and police during post-protest detentions, curfew sweeps and night

[37] See Historical Context in Introduction for background on the 2009 coup d'état in Honduras.

raids in homes." (p. 235; p.10–11) In the case of Honduras, military soldiers and law enforcement officers practiced sexual violence against dissenters to reinforce gender hierarchies. For one thing, state and military officials imposed their gender and "sexual advantage" on female activists, eroticizing processes of sociopolitical change so as to make them, as Goett (2017) writes, "sexually satisfying and politically empowering" for the heteropatriarchal state and its elites. Additionally, targeting women's breasts and vaginas—body parts historically associated with the female body—reduces dissenters to sexual and reproductive beings who do not belong in the public sphere; consequently, they must be put "back in their (domestic) place" because they stepped outside of their bounds. (Bellino, 2010) Thus, by exerting sexual violence and targeting women's sexual and reproductive organs, Honduran state officials not only inflict direct and physical harm on women's bodies, but they also impose symbolic and structural violence. The justification for these state crimes, in turn, likely becomes that these female dissenters are promiscuous and vile, and therefore deserve to be punished. Here, women are once again relegated as whores in the virgin-whore dichotomy or *marianismo.* (Stevens, 1973)

Though in distinct sociohistorical contexts, the Guatemalan and Honduran states targeted women's reproductive and sexual capacities with violence in an act of bio-power, which Foucault (1978) defines as the "subjugation of bodies and the control of populations." (p. 140) To situate the deliberate attacks on women's bodies in Guatemala and Honduras within Foucault's framework, I argue that processes of nation-state building have exerted sexual violence as a form of bio-power to destabilize and dismantle the sexual and reproductive capacities of women (and men) who do not follow the so-called "status quo." During the Guatemalan armed conflict, the state justified these principles with the ideology that Maya women would become mothers to future guerillas. (Speed, 2019, p. 38; Velásquez Nimatuj, 2016, p. 4) In post-coup Honduras, the state

deemed female activists a threat to the "natural order," as their reproductive capacities would allow them to bring in the next generation of political dissenters. Thus, in order to contain women's reproductive abilities, the new government responded with widespread violence under the guise of nation-state building.

Everyday Violence

A concept originally developed by medical anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992, 1996), everyday violence consists of daily practices and expressions of violence that, Bourgois (2001) claims, result "from the internalization of historically entrenched structural violence." (p. 7) It manifests itself in the micro-interactions of daily life, namely through interpersonal aggression and "common crime," such as gang violence. (Bourgois, 2001) Perhaps everyday violence is best understood as an intersection of several other forms, such as structural, symbolic, and state. Those experiencing everyday violence have likely so internalized their daily conditions that they fail to recognize them as violent acts produced by greater socio-economic-political structures. In turn, the violence that takes place in the everyday lives of people, such as intrafamily violence and "common crime," is normalized and unquestioned.

Official discourse in El Salvador contributes to the normalization of these everyday forms of violence. Here, I briefly return to discuss how labelling violence against women as "crimes of passion" or products of jealousy reduces these crimes to intimate acts within the private realm. Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele's July 2019 Tweet, in which he labels the murder of 35-year-old Keni Guadalupe Larios a "feminicide of passion," presents the act of violence as a personal issue, implying that it is unworthy of further state investigation. Depicting crimes against women as products of passion or jealousy depoliticizes domestic, intrafamily, and intimate partner violence, as it suggests that jealousy and "passion" are natural in a romantic or intimate

relationship, and therefore, draw no connection to violence in the "public" sphere.

Neoliberal Multicriminalism

Everyday violence and gang violence, narco-violence, militarization, and state violence—all of which Speed (2016) associates with neoliberal multicriminalism[38]—are also closely woven in together in the Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Honduran social fabric. (Bourgois, 2001; Sanford, 2008; Speed, 2014, 2016; Walsh and Menjívar, 2016a) I took note of the ways in which the violence of neoliberal multicriminalism perpetuates and normalizes cycles of intrafamily violence and "common crime" in my interview with Isabel, an administrator from Fundación Sobrevivientes in Guatemala City, when I asked her how violence against women is broadly understood in Guatemalan society:

> Yes, look, regretfully [violence] is the use of power over another person. This is how violence is used in our country, regardless of whether you are a man or a woman. And we grew up during the internal armed conflict—that is, 36 years of conflict—where violence was used by both sides. And each one appealed that it was the truth and they justified themselves in all kinds of actions before their truth. And within this, we were born, we grew up within a circle of violence that moves from generation to generation. So what does this do? It creates situations of violence that today we see as so normal and we always have a justification. They killed her? She was involved in something. It is the same discourse that was used during the armed conflict. So whoever appeared dead had messed with the communists, right?

Isabel highlights the discursive and material practices of violence that evolved during the internal armed conflict in Guatemala, and how these have persisted into the present day. During the civil conflict, she notes, the state punished people for taking part in something they should not have

[38] Speed (2016) develops the term neoliberal multicriminalism in response to the failed promises of neoliberal multiculturalism in the 1990s, which was designed to bring neoliberal economic reform, democracy, and rule of law to Latin America. Neoliberal multicriminalism, according to Speed, encapsulates "all the damage of unrestrained neoliberal economic remains . . . illegal economies on a massive scale, and states simultaneously moving toward authoritarian governance and militarizing to combat illegality [and criminality] while corruptly participating in it to reap some of the profits." (2016, p. 15)

been involved in, such as sympathizing with communist ideologies. These justifications allowed state officials and military officers to commit widespread acts of sexual violence, torture, and murder under the guise of "destroying communists" and fighting for the "greater good." (Black, Jamail, and Chinchilla, 1984, p. 11) In El Salvador, similar sentiments arose during and after *La Matanza*.[39] In the years following *La Matanza*, Hume (2008) argues, the Salvadoran military remained present and permeated everyday life with the "indiscriminate use of violence" and repression, which became even more manifest during the Salvadoran armed conflict as "perpetrators of violence were not only invisible death squads and uniformed combatants but neighbors, family members, and friends." (p. 70)

Violent, repressive responses from the state (such as mass-scale sexual violence and death squads) in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have, as Hume (2008) notes, "shape[d] and transform[ed] what is considered ordinary, increasing people's thresholds for tolerating violence and dictating their responses." (p. 70) Isabel, from Fundación Sobrevivientes, drew attention to this notion in our interview. She reflected on how the Guatemalan internal armed conflict affected "people's thresholds for tolerating violence," as children and young adults grew accustomed and desensitized to seeing violence as an everyday solution to problems. These sentiments, she claims, are echoed in Guatemala's youth today:

> With so many acts of violence that occur daily, the first to be on the scenes are children from the age of 10, even 2 years. Already seeing those scenes. And then they listen to the gunshots and instead of hiding, the children run out to see the dead person, right? If there is more blood than the day before, right? So what does this do? It normalizes, it flattens emotions because it no longer disturbs you. You no longer develop that emotion of thinking, well, poor person, maybe they had a family, right? Feelings of sympathy, empathy. Then that child grows, so in a violent situation, instead of responding to protect, they will let it happen because they already see it as normal.

[39] See Historical Context in Introduction for background on *La Matanza*.

Thus, the normalization of violence during periods of civil conflict in Guatemala, as well as in El Salvador and Honduras, has become manifest in everyday forms of violence. These cycles, Menjívar (2008) claims, demonstrate the "extent to which violence begets more violence, and how it is created and recreated in different spheres of life." (p. 133) Therefore, to better understand the naturalization of intrafamily violence and "common crime" in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, it is crucial to unpack histories of state violence.

"Private" Violence and Statewide Impunity

To bring these analyses back into conversation with the implementation of policies in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, the widespread use of violence at the hands of the state naturalizes these actions as a response to "personal" problems, particularly intrafamily violence. In failing to acknowledge these connections, political discourse relegates intrafamily violence to the "private" or "personal" sphere, in which the state presumably has no business investigating or prosecuting perpetrators. Due in part to these perceptions, policies designed to address gender-based forms of violence are overwhelmingly met with impunity, which then further normalizes these crimes by minimizing their magnitude. This becomes salient when drawing historical context into conversation: In the case of Guatemala, most perpetrators of war crimes were never held accountable for their actions. (CJA, 2018) Additionally, when the 1996 Peace Accords established a new Guatemalan National Civilian Police (PNC), the institution "recycled" thousands of agents from the former National Police with minimal training and preparation. Therefore, the "reformed" system directly absorbed remnants of the armed conflict. (Méndez Gutiérrez, 2013) "Recycling" has contributed to widespread impunity for perpetrators of crimes committed during the armed conflict which, in turn, has translated into the present day for aggressors in crimes against women. (Hume, 2008; Menjívar, 2008; Sanford, 2008; Velasco, 2008; Bellino, 2010; Ronderos, 2011;

Ramisetty and Muriu, 2013; Musalo and Bookey, 2014)

The implementation of policies is also affected by the internalization of these everyday forms of violence. Processes of walking and waiting (Cookson, 2018) pose structural challenges to women who wish to report incidents of violence to law enforcement. Additionally, structural impunity has virtually ensured that perpetrators will not be held responsible. Consequently, fear of retaliation is often a concern for those wishing to report crimes. Specific to everyday violence, many women may also not report instances of violence in their day-to-day life because they have internalized these conditions and thus do not recognize them as violence; they endure their suffering because that is the way things are. (Menjívar, 2011) In several of my interviews, such as with Marta from CODEFEM, themes of religion came up once again in relation to women internalizing the conditions of their lives:

> **L**: Many women internalize the conditions in which they have lived, such as poverty or daily violence, and they think they must endure it because that's the way things are…
> **M**: That's how God wants it!
> **L**: Have you seen examples of this?
> **M**: Ooooh!!! [Laughs] That is the most common, let's say. And now, even here in the city, and even more so in rural areas, they believe it is God's will. In other words, religion has contributed so much to this martyrdom of women. It is God's will.

Marta's example helps explain how symbolic violence manifests itself in cycles of everyday violence. Additionally, in cases where women do recognize this violence and choose to report, the individuals who make up the structures in place, such as law enforcement and judicial institutions, have likely internalized these forms of violence as part of "the way things are" and therefore do not deem these cases as worthy of further investigation or prosecution. This is precisely why "recycling" law enforcement agents who served during the internal armed conflict has been harmful; these agents, and their successors, have so deeply internalized the routine use of violence to "solve problems" that they continue to view it as a *natural* response in the present day.

Therefore, as Das (2007) observes, state violence "attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary." (p. 1)

Political Violence

Though the terms political and state violence are sometimes used interchangeably, I draw distinctions between the two in an effort to integrate my informants' insights. During interviews, I noticed a pattern when I asked about the direct and indirect effects of political violence in the lives of women. Rather than diving into discussions of state terror as I expected, some of their responses revolved around the challenges that women face in politics. In the context of my interviews, therefore, I interpret political violence to be a form of gendered, structural, and symbolic violence exercised against women in the political sphere. On the other hand, I define state violence as state terror: gendered, structural, symbolic, and direct violence (which includes sexual violence, disappearances, massacres, and murders) committed at the hands of the state to attain a political and/or economic goal.

In the context of my interviewees' insights, political, symbolic, and gendered violence share conceptual overlaps. Walsh and Menjívar (2016a) draw from Araque and Ospina Vélez (2008) to argue that "gender ideologies create spheres of social action that not only contribute to normalizing expressions of violence but also to justifying 'punishments' for deviations from normative gender role expectations." (p. 593) This interpretation recalls notions of symbolic violence with a gendered lens and it came up in several of my interviews. As previously mentioned, I arrived in Guatemala in the recent aftermath of a presidential election, in which Alejandro Giammattei, of the right-wing Vamos political party, defeated Sandra Torres, from the left-wing National Unity of Hope party. Likely due to the proximity of my visit to a national election, most of my informants in Guatemala had significant insights into the political process and its treatment

of women. Several, for instance, spoke about the barriers female political figures and candidates face, especially the gendered ways in which they are criticized by the public. Isabel, an administrator from Fundación Sobrevivientes, claimed that women's political participation is affected by structural and symbolic factors:

> **L**: Do you believe that political violence still exists? Does it affect women in Guatemala directly or indirectly?
> **I**: Well, yes, it affects us both [ways]. One, the difficulty of participating in political spaces during electoral contests. An example is that today in the new cabinet of the president, there is only one [female] minister, who I think will be more of a secretary. And the rest are men, right? The issue of even being able to participate under the same conditions becomes difficult because you must have financial resources and time. If they give you spaces to go as a candidate and a deputy, these are not from the upper echelons, but rather are almost the last or the intermediates ones where the possibilities of entering with small parties are almost nil. And those who top the first lists are men. So there you see that it is still much more difficult for women to participate. The other is the ways in which they are attacked. If a woman is dressed a certain way at a meeting, why? How indecent . . . Even the private aspects are attacked. She is ugly, she has fake breasts . . . A man is not questioned for this and the attacks sound different. They call him a thief, a swindler. . . But they will never attack his...
> **L**: His physical appearance?
> **I**: His physical appearance.

To get a better sense of how female politicians are publicly represented in Guatemala, I perused user comments on social and other online media platforms. Many commenters repeatedly referred to presidential candidate Sandra Torres as "ugly" and a "witch," while they called Alejandro Giammattei, as Isabel noted, a liar. As I previously discussed, the term "witch" is highly gendered and is typically used in reference to a woman who "lacks a moral compass," particularly in the Judeo-Christian faiths. The term itself suggests that Torres lacks the moral character to run for—much less, hold—political office. Questioning the morality of women in politics also came up in my conversation with Marta from CODEFEM, who shared an example of her former colleague: "One of our companions here, we motivated her to be a candidate for mayor of her town. A very intelligent woman. On her social networks, they [commenters] posted that . . . she was going to

the capital to whore around." The comments directed towards Marta's former co-worker once again recall the concept of *marianismo* (Stevens, 1973), as commenters deemed she went to the capital to "whore around." These social media comments draw connections to the virgin-whore dichotomy because they suggest that a woman who "oversteps her boundaries" by taking on a position in the public sphere is a "whore." On the other extreme, a woman confined to the so-called "private" sphere, who stays at home and cares for her family, is exemplary and righteous. Yet, as I have discussed, women within the "private" sphere can also be labelled whores if they transgress their social roles as dutiful mothers and wives, by, for instance, questioning the authority of a patriarchal figure.

Isabel and Marta, however, also spoke about the structural barriers that women looking to run for political office face. Isabel noted that running for office requires time and money, and Marta compared political parties in Guatemala to businesses; she heard it can cost millions to be accepted into a political party. Freidenberg (2019) observes that Honduran women face similar party and socio-economic barriers, due to "circles of male power that foster old practices, making it difficult to select female candidates" and the "lack of resources for female candidates' campaigns (cash ceilings), since women have less access to resources (money, political capital, mobilization capacity) than men." (p. 4) Discussions on structural barriers to women in politics also came up in my interview with Teresa, an administrator from CEFEMINA in Costa Rica. Teresa claims that poverty weakens processes of political mobilization: "I always say that one of the things that demobilizes the most is precisely… Well, not in general terms, let's say, but I believe that impoverishment demobilizes a lot, right? Because people are more and more concerned about rice and beans and less about generating collective actions." Teresa's claim highlights how structural conditions impede working class women from freely participating in political processes, whether

they choose to run for office or mobilize around political issues.

Structural implications of political violence also became relevant in my phone interview with Adriana, an administrator from Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres. Adriana discussed the structural impact of political violence on the lives of women in El Salvador in the form of wrongful termination of women's employment:

> **A**: There is political violence, of course. Women have been kicked out of their jobs in a way, well, not in the right way. Their rights have been violated. There is political violence, but it is no longer the same violence that we lived thirty years ago. Now there is a social violence that seriously affects the country's situation.
> **L**: So when we speak of political violence and how it affects women, you have mainly seen this in the positions of women who lost their jobs as a result of social violence, like gangs, and things like that?
> **A**: Yes, there is above all [inaudible] political violence. Not to political struggle.

Adriana highlights how the state exacerbates women's exposure to structural violence by disrupting their economic livelihoods. This may include, as she points out, the wrongful termination of women in positions of employment, which often stem from the belief that women are unfit to work in the public sphere (thus recalling symbolic violence). Adriana's point also prompted me to think about women who are not ousted directly, but rather, lose their economic livelihoods as a result of neoliberal multicriminalism. (Speed, 2016) For instance, women who work as street vendors or manage their own small businesses often face extortion from gangs. These cycles of extortion are further aggravated by the state's militarization of everyday life to fight gangs, making it unsafe for women to run their businesses out on the street due to the daily presence of this violence.

Highlighting the intersection of structural, symbolic, and gender violence with political violence is worth discussing in the context of policy implementation because representations of women in the political sphere matter. If women are poorly represented and mistreated in politics, policymakers are unlikely to create laws that genuinely work for women's best interests. In these

cases, political violence can help breed legal violence (Menjívar and Abrego, 2012; Walsh and Menjívar, 2016b), as laws are constructed to subliminally (or openly) work against women's rights. Additionally, repeatedly calling women in political positions of power "whores" and "witches" ingrains this vocabulary into the everyday speech of people, essentially making it acceptable to call women who do not conform to normative gender expectations these terms.

I do not wish, however, to suggest that increasing the number of women in political positions of power alone will combat political and legal violence. Several of my informants in Guatemala, for instance, made it clear that there are women in office with conservative views that would vote against resolutions that women's organizations rally for. Additionally, some of my interviewees mentioned that because women continue to be underrepresented in the political realm, those who already hold office are likely subjected to pressure from their male counterparts. While I am cognizant of gender hierarchies and dynamics within political and legal frameworks in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, these discussions are beyond the scope of this work.

Gender and Gendered Violence

Just as the terms political and state violence are sometimes used interchangeably, so are gender and gendered violence. Menjívar (2008), Menjívar and Walsh (2017), and Walsh and Menjívar (2016a), however, draw from Hammar's (1999) work to highlight conceptual distinctions between the two. Menjívar (2008) emphasizes that Hammar's (1999) conceptualization of gender violence refers to "the gender differences in a gender-imbalanced political economy that disadvantage women," while gendered violence constitutes "acts of violence, including physical, psychological, and linguistic." (p. 126; p. 91) Thus, per Hammar's (1999) conceptualization, it would seem that gender violence is rooted in structural forms of violence, while direct and symbolic violence lay at the core of gendered violence. On the other hand, per Merry's (2009)

conceptualization, gender violence is rooted in symbolic violence and aggravated by structural and direct violence, as it is "embedded in enduring patterns of kinship and marriage, but it can be exacerbated by very contemporary political and economic tensions." (p. 2) Merry also claims that racism and inequality, conquest, occupation, colonialism, warfare and civil conflict, economic disruptions and poverty breed conditions that feed cycles of gender violence globally. Due to these intersecting conditions that induce structural forms of violence, Merry (2009) observes "it is not possible to develop any simple model that adequately describes [the] diversity [of gender violence] or the way it changes over time. Instead, it is important to locate interpersonal violence within wider social patterns of power and inequality." (p. 23) The continuity between interpersonal violence and "common crime" can be seen not only through acts of the state, but also through the effects of neoliberal global economic policies, which reduce state and community support for the poor. Urbanization, wage labor, mobility, and the economic and cultural effects of globalization, Merry (2009) notes, have consequently "weakened the kinship-based systems that long served to control violence within families." (p. 2) All of these factors place women, especially those living in conditions of poverty, at risk of repeated victimization.

Thus, if, as Hammar posits, gender violence refers to the "the gender differences in a gender-imbalanced political economy that disadvantage women," in the context of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, it helps explain the prominence of heteronormative gender hierarchies and ideologies in the public and private sphere. Gendered violence, in turn, comprises the tools used to entrench these hierarchies/ideologies into the socio-economic-political fabric and punish those who do not conform to them. Hammar (1999) and Menjívar's (2008) conceptualization of gender and gendered violence recalls the justifications provided for crimes against women in political discourse. As previously mentioned, crimes against women in the so-called private sphere

are often justified as crimes of passion. I noted that the "passion" in question often refers to jealousy that arose from a breach in a communal sharing (CS) or authority ranking (AR) relationship, such as a suspected or confirmed infidelity.[40] (see Fiske, 1991) Araque and Ospina Vélez (2008) argue that gender ideologies normalize expressions of violence and justify 'punishments' for those who diverge from normative social and gender roles; in the context of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, it would seem that gender constructions set in place by the state in conjunction with the Catholic and Evangelical Church have normalized certain acts of violence as appropriate responses or punishments for those who fail to conform to normative gender roles. The justification of crimes against women using gender ideologies also establishes patterns of culpability that cast blame on the victim, a tactic also historically used to justify state violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. One of my informants, Adela from FLACSO-Guatemala, commented on the gendered dimensions of culpability and its ties to the civil conflict:

> Being a post-war society, it is important to refer to the immediate history of the internal armed conflict and how the atrocities that the state committed—for its counterinsurgency policy after the invasion of the United States in 1954—created generations of people who, in some way, even justified this state violence, right? It was very frequent and it is very frequent in the case of violence against women. Let people say, well, you're going to see what it was, right? If the state killed him, it was because he was involved in something . . . All this also makes you build uncritical personalities. And in the case of women, this is accentuated, right? Because there is a message that if you are abused, if you are harassed, it is your fault, because you were dressed this way, you were in the wrong bar at the wrong time, because you should be in your house and not on the street . . . So all this contributes, of course, to internalizing behaviors to avoid violence or this notion of guilt.

Adela observes that notions of culpability have transitioned from the internal armed conflict to violence against women in the "post-war" era. During the civil conflict, she notes, the state commonly justified murder by blaming the the victim for suspicious activity, such as collaborating

[40] An authority ranking relationship is generally hierarchical, indicating that there is/are subordinate(s) and superior(s). A communal sharing relationship may be described as one in which the involved parties feel that "your pain is my pain" or "your happiness is my happiness."

with communist rebel forces. In the "post-war" context, crimes against women are also justified by placing the spotlight on the women themselves; some of the justifications include, as Adela stated, that the women were dressed seductively or provocatively, they were at a bar or club at the wrong time, or they should have just stayed at home instead of being out on the street. This then shapes the narrative that women who seek to enter the public sphere, through labor and/or leisure, expose themselves to great risk of violence, and should therefore stay at home for their own safety. In turn, women who go out into the public sector and are killed, raped, and/or harassed are blamed for ignoring the so-called warnings and "looking for trouble." Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández reinforces these narratives, as he repeatedly emphasizes the significance of women's roles in the family and the private sphere in official discourse. For example, in a February 2019 speech on the Spotlight Initiative, Hernández highlighted that "it is necessary to work on educating and supporting the mother of families so that she, in turn, can replicate at home through her children and also through her partner or husband." Under these terms, a woman's influence in the public sphere is limited to the values and morals that she rubs off on her husband and children. This evokes the sense that husbands and children are the only ones meant to engage with the public sphere and outside community, such as through schooling and/or labor.

Gendered violence also manifests in the political realm, primarily with symbolic dimensions. Several of my interviewees argued that women in political positions are criticized by the public for their outfits, bodies, appearance, or families. Elena, from Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER in Costa Rica, observes that criticisms of women in politics are directed at their families and their bodies:

> Attacks that women experience when they get into politics have to do, number one, with attacks on the family—not directly—but attacks on the family and attacks on the body. I think these are two strong aspects. When it comes to family, I think there is no turning point in the sense that women can bear it, but when they tell you something about your

> sons, your daughters, your mother, it's like… it neutralizes them, okay? Things that do not happen with men and that have to do precisely because men usually do not take on caretaking, right? And the other is about physical appearance.

Elena notes how indirect attacks on women in the political sphere took hold in the case of Alejandra Mora Mora, a human rights activist, lawyer, and professor who served as Minister for the Status of Women and President of the National Institute of Women (INAMU) from 2014 to 2018. Elena said the public criticized Mora Mora so harshly following the end of her term as minister, she chose to retreat from the public eye: "[Mora Mora] was not a woman like those that involved her body or others. But the attacks she received were such that we saw her disappear. And since she stopped being a minister until now, [she has] a totally low profile. And I say, how crazy! I mean, because, if you had such a high position, you should keep going up! Like most men!" Elena's observation of how female politicians are criticized in Costa Rica illustrates how women's bodies are commoditized with respect to normative gender expectations. Female politicians are also specifically targeted for the factors that irrevocably "mark" them as women in a male-dominated sphere. On the one hand, their work and accomplishments are trivialized as their bodies are objectified by the male gaze. (Frederickson and Roberts, 1997) On the other hand, normative gender expectations dictate that women are natural caretakers, and should therefore focus on rearing children rather than running for political office. Thus, as Freidenberg (2019) claims, women face "cultural and attitude barriers, due to the belief among citizens and party elite that women are less capable of being candidates, of winning an election and/or governing . . . and due to the presence of cultural values at odds with gender equality and nondiscrimination." (p. 4)

Legal Violence

Walsh and Menjívar (2016b) integrate the concept of legal violence into their discussion on legal tolls and persistent impunity for feminicide in Guatemala, noting how it affects the

implementation of policies on gender-based violence. Menjívar and Abrego (2012) originally conceptualized legal violence within the context of Central American migration to the United States, arguing that "Central American immigrants in tenuous legal statuses experience current immigration laws in qualitatively different and more negative ways than in the recent past . . . this change is rooted in the effects of an increasingly fragmented and arbitrary field of immigration law gradually intertwined with criminal law." (p. 1381) Legal violence, they write, helps "theorize the place of the law in shaping everyday life more generally." (2012, p. 1381)

Legal violence takes on many forms in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, especially when it comes to policies that reify normative gender expectations and punish women for stepping outside of these bounds. When I asked about laws that potentially work against the better interests of women, my informants shared numerous observations with me. Adela, from FLACSO-Guatemala, gave an example of a now defunct provision in the 1963 Guatemalan Civil Code that claimed men could oppose their wives going out to work if it interfered with childcare. Following a search of the 1963 Civil Code, I found the provision in question: Article 114, which originally stated, "The husband may object to the wife engaging in activities outside the home, provided that he supplies what is necessary to support himself and his opposition has sufficiently justified reasons. The judge will decide outright what is appropriate." (República de Guatemala, 1963) This provision directly clashes with Article 16(1)(g) of CEDAW, which the Guatemalan government ratified in 1982: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women . . . the same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation." A Congressional decree repealed Article 114 in 1998, sixteen years after the Guatemalan state ratified CEDAW.

The fact that the article was repealed in the aftermath of the civil conflict further reflects how deeply entrenched heteronormative constructions of gender and the family unit were in the social fabric during this time. As previously mentioned, and as Sanford (2008) demonstrates, these legacies of direct and indirect state violence have translated almost directly into cycles of gender-based violence today, namely when it comes to feminicide. Thus, while the article in question no longer holds legal value, it remains a symbolic and structural barrier for women in the "public" sphere, especially among the citizenry who lived through the conflict. To relate this back to the implementation of policies on gender-based violence, it is important to note that these attitudes, shaped by antiquated and obsolete laws and provisions, continue to be invoked in symbolic and structural ways against women and their families who seek the justice and reparations accorded to them under the law.

Policies in Guatemala also have loopholes that allow perpetrators of sexual violence to evade prosecution. This is most evident in the country's first Penal Code of 1973: Article 200 of the original document declared that "in the crimes of [rape, sexual aggression, statutory rape, and kidnapping], the criminal liability of the active subject or the penalty, if applicable, will be extinguished by the legitimate marriage of the victim with the offender, provided that the victim is older than twelve years and, in any case, with the prior approval of the Public Ministry." (República de Guatemala, 1973) The article in question required the victim to be older than twelve years old and called for approval from the Public Ministry, but at no point mentioned the victim's free and full consent to marriage as a requirement.[41] Consequently, Article 200 of the 1973

[41] Police and court systems also frequently overlook women's safety and best interests in their application of the law by encouraging women to reconcile with their perpetrators. Walsh and Menjívar (2016a) emphasize that women looking to prosecute their perpetrators in El Salvador and Honduras are often pushed into mediation, "a court-mediated attempt to reunite victims with their aggressors." (p. 598)

Guatemalan Penal Code contradicts Article 16(1)(a) and 16(1)(b) in CEDAW, which establish the state's requirement to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women (a) the same right to enter into marriage, and (b) the same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent. (UN Women, 2019) The Guatemalan Constitutional Court eventually declared Article 200 unconstitutional in 2006—32 years after the original Penal Code. As seen with Article 114 from the 1963 Civil Code, this policy remained in full effect throughout the internal armed conflict; considering the mass-scale use of sexual violence and disappearances during this period, Article 200 likely reinforced systemic impunity for perpetrators of war crimes.

In El Salvador and Honduras, absolute bans on abortion have interfered with the rights accorded to women under CEDAW. During our interview, Adriana from Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres noted that the Salvadoran government ratified CEDAW in 1981, but continues to implement harsh abortion laws that actively work against a woman's right to reproductive choice as laid out in the international convention. Article 16(1)(e) accords women and men "the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights."[42] Thus, despite the ratification of international conventions such as CEDAW and the Convention of Belém do Pará, all forms of abortion continue to be criminalized and heavily persecuted in El Salvador. A similar dynamic may be observed in Honduras, where the government has instituted an absolute ban on abortion despite having ratified CEDAW in 1983. The Salvadoran and Honduran state's stance on women's sexual and reproductive rights recalls legal violence because more often than

[42] I checked if El Salvador or Honduras entered a reservation for Article 16 and found that neither did. In fact, the Convention "Committee remains convinced that reservations to article 16, whether lodged for national, traditional, religious or cultural reasons, are incompatible with the Convention and therefore impermissible and should be reviewed and modified or withdrawn." (UN Women, 2020)

not, laws on abortion are invoked before laws that address violence against women. This can, first and foremost, be observed in the priority that the Salvadoran and Honduran governments have given to the enforcement and implementation of anti-abortion laws over international protocols such as CEDAW. Anti-abortion laws are so heavily imposed that women who experience miscarriages are often accused of murdering their unborn child and are subsequently imprisoned when they seek medical help. (Viterna, 2012) This rhetoric has also made its way into political discourse in Guatemala, where abortion is only legal in cases of rape, incest, or when the mother's life is in danger. As previously mentioned, in November 2016, former Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales openly denounced abortion: "As you know, I am not in favor of abortion. I will always be in favor of life, family, and marriage." (Morales, 2016 Nov. 12) In his speech, Morales not only condemns abortion, but also follows this statement by upholding what he deems are the fundamental units of society: life, family, and marriage. He implies that women who undergo abortions pose a real threat to these national values. In El Salvador, 30-year-old Maria Edis' miscarriage led to a 30-year prison sentence, which, Viterna (2012) observes, prosecutors justified with the notion that Maria "did not 'act like a biological mother' who would have taken actions to save her unborn child." (p. 249) Connections to motherhood, therefore, seemingly assign value to women in society. National laws overtly reflect these values, as well. The Guatemalan Law for the Dignification and Integral Promotion of Women, for instance, claims that "in order to provide a stable environment that favors the eradication of discrimination and violence against women, the State will promote the *revalorization* of marriage and motherhood." (República de Guatemala, 1999; emphasis added) If we look at Steven's (1973) concept of *marianismo* once more, women who fail to embody a virgin-like virtue as obedient mothers and wives, are, in turn, vile "whores" who deserve the utmost punishment for their cruel and evil practices. In turn, these women are

deemed unworthy of justice and support from the state, regardless of whether or not their pregnancy resulted from sexual violence or their miscarriage from structural inequalities.

Situating legal violence within a multisided violence framework helps unpack, as Menjívar and Abrego (2012) argue, the place of the law in shaping everyday life. In the case of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, it appears that legal violence feeds into several other forms, such as everyday, structural, symbolic, and direct violence. Because the language and purpose of laws helps shape attitudes on gender roles and expectations, legal violence shares certain overlaps with symbolic violence. The ways in which laws are constructed to benefit and privilege certain sectors of the population over others, such as upper-class, mestizo or European-descended men, draw ties to legal and structural violence. In turn, these symbolic and structural conditions become normalized through the application and implementation of laws that either directly or indirectly work against promoting women's rights, thus yielding everyday violence. Lastly, laws that criminalize abortion exert direct violence on women's bodies, as women in El Salvador and Honduras are required by law to endure painful, life-threatening pregnancies.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Understanding the micro- and macro-processes of gender-based violence in Central America is a monumental task that requires synthesizing historical, political, social, economic, cultural, and legal sources. As time and space allowed, this work aimed to set up a panoramic look into the factors that affect policy implementation and enforcement on the ground in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Following a survey of the extant literature, I found that most scholars discuss high rates of gender-based violence in these countries in the context of impunity. With this literature as a point of departure, Galtung's violence triangle and Menjívar's multisided violence

theoretical frameworks then helped me make better sense of how violence is shaped and understood in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, and, in turn, the effects that visible and invisible forms of violence have on gender-based violence.

In this work, I revisit and situate the qualitative data I gathered through eight in-depth, semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis into these frameworks to understand how policy implementation is affected and processes of impunity are propelled by structural, cultural, symbolic, direct, state, everyday, political, gender, gendered, and legal violence. I found that structural and symbolic violence often work hand in hand in the micro-processes of gender-based violence: normative gender expectations reinforced by religion and the state, for instance, form barriers to women seeking access to systems of justice and help justify the nature of crimes against women. I discovered links between direct, state, and everyday violence, noting that the daily use of violence during internal armed conflicts in Guatemala and El Salvador, and post-coup d'état in Honduras, contributed to the normalization of the use of violence as a legitimate and appropriate response in the micro-processes of life. Drawing from my interviewees' insights, I also learned about the deep ties between political, gender and gendered violence, more specifically how women in politics continue to be attacked in gendered ways with verbal and written assaults on their bodies. Because gender-based violence laws are the very core of this project, I unearth how the law itself—more specifically, the language and framing of legislation—interferes with implementation and enforcement processes. All these forms of violence, tied together with intersections of race, class, gender, age, language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, disability status, sexuality, and gender identity, ultimately form part of a much greater ensemble that constitute—or at the very least, help inform—gender-based violence and violence against women. As

previously mentioned, Speed (2014) so aptly conceptualizes this nexus of socio-economic-political factors as a "dreadful mosaic."

Future Directions

Surveying academic literature on gender-based violence inspired me to frame my research question around policy implementation and multisided violence. However, due to time constraints in the field, my research question addresses policy implementation on a broader geographic basis, drawing little distinction between urban and rural areas. With that said, there is a gap in the literature on processes of policy implementation in urban and rural areas of all three countries, but even more so in El Salvador and Honduras. Beck (2017) addresses this gap in Guatemala; her longitudinal ethnographic research on micro-lending NGOs in Guatemala problematizes how these organizations operationalize development interventions in rural and semi-rural communities. Guiding questions for research in rural El Salvador and Honduras include: does structural, cultural, symbolic, direct, state, political, gender, gendered, and legal violence affect policy implementation differently in urban and rural areas? If so, how? For a more focused implementation case study: how are laws perceived, interpreted, and implemented in a specific rural community in Guatemala, El Salvador, or Honduras?

Another possible direction for this study is a focus on Costa Rica, which has been even more understudied than El Salvador and Honduras in contexts of gender-based violence and violence against women. I did not focus on Costa Rica in this project due, in part, to its significantly lower rates of reported female homicides than in other Central American countries, but also because it has a markedly distinct socio-political-economic history. Yet, the fact that reported cases of feminicide, sexual violence, and intrafamily violence are significantly lower in Costa Rica should not indicate that gender and gendered violence are nonexistent there. Elena, from

Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER, pointed this out during our interview: "Costa Rica is assumed to be fine. That there is no issue of violence and, of course, many times I also understand when we compare it with a situation like El Salvador or Nicaragua or Honduras, of course we are fine. But we are not fine. It is just that we are not as *abysmal* as the other countries are." Studies on gender-based violence and the implementation of policies in Costa Rica would, therefore, generate important contributions to the literature on these topics.

One other future direction for this project includes a focus on violence against lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women in each of the Central American countries. More specifically, this research could explore questions such as: are lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women explicitly and/or implicitly protected under gender-based violence laws? Are gender-based violence laws applied differently to lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women than they are to heterosexual and cisgender women? If so, how?

Women's Agency and Vulnerability

In line with my feminist, decolonial epistemology, my primary responsibility in this research lay with the women who took the time to share their expertise on issues of gender-based violence in Central America with me. (Chang *et al*., 2017, p. 194; Madison, 2005, p. 111) This research, therefore, aims to speak truth to the work of human rights and women's organizations to ensure that women define their own experiences with human rights, instead of researchers interpreting them for and about them. (Gervais, 2010, p. 23) I tried to secure this, in part, by learning from my participants' firsthand experience to inform my own understandings of violence. Through their work (rather than through scholarship), these women inductively reason that violence is multisided and develop sophisticated theoretical frameworks with which to understand gender-based violence.

These organizations continue to find new ways to support women's rights and liberation. Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres, for instance, developed a Comprehensive Support Center for Female Survivors of Violence (CAIMUS), where women facing violence can find support, information, and advice. CODEFEM created a Local Women's Commission for Disaster Reduction (COLMRED), Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres established a Comprehensive Education in Sexuality (EIS) Coalition to promote women's education on sexual and reproductive rights, and Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER in Costa Rica pushed for a legislative bill to sanction street harassment. Women are also voicing their concerns through creative media; in Guatemala, Regina José Galindo and Mandy Joha have held powerful performance art demonstrations that visualize the severity of violence against women. I personally observed voice and agency manifested in urban and street art in San José, Costa Rica (see Appendices). Drawing from Bunch (2004), Gervais (2010) emphasizes that these manifestations are powered by "the voice and agency of citizens who are not just passive objects with needs." (p. 31; p. 23)

In light of the numerous forms of violence they face everyday, the trope of the "vulnerable woman" remains a key component of the heteropatriarchal state in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. During our interview, Marta from CODEFEM claimed: "Women are not vulnerable. We are made vulnerable. The system makes women vulnerable." In this sense, vulnerability is not an inherent trait. Rather, it is imposed on women in multiple, intersecting ways by local, national, and global systems of inequality. (Speed, 2019, p. 3) As women continue to speak out, inform themselves, and form solidarity networks, they elucidate how structural, symbolic, direct, state, political, gender, gendered, and legal forms of violence aim to discredit them. Despite the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives, these resilient actors continue to strive toward a life free of all forms of violence.

APPENDICES

Table 1. Reported Cases of Intrafamily Violence in Guatemala, 2008-2017

Year	Reported Cases of Intrafamily Violence
2008	23,721
2009	31,497
2010	32,017
2011	33,484
2012	36,107
2013	36,170
2014	34,330
2015	31,929
2016	31,190
2017	30,384

Source: Policía Nacional Civil; UNDP; Infosegura/MINGOB

Table 2. Deaths of Women Registered as Homicides in Honduras, 2005-2018

Year	Homicides
2005	175
2006	202
2007	295
2008	313
2009	363
2010	385
2011	512
2012	606
2013	636
2014	526
2015	478
2016	468
2017	388
2018	383

Source: Policía Preventiva/Observatorio de la Violencia, UNAH

Table 3. Reported Cases of Sexual Violence Against Women in Honduras, 2005-2018

Year	Reported Cases of Sexual Violence
2005	1,052
2006	1,111
2007	988
2008	1,241
2009	1,937
2010	2,690
2011	2,811
2012	2,648
2013	2,561
2014	2,195
2015	2,619
2016	2,722
2017	2,761
2018	2,598

Source: Policía Preventiva/Observatorio de la Violencia, UNAH

Table 4. Reported Cases of Intrafamily Violence in El Salvador, 2005-2018

Year	Reported Cases of Intrafamily Violence
2005	3,478
2006	3,586
2007	4,443
2008	4,789
2009	5,208
2010	1,697
2011	1,964
2012	1,719
2013	3,052
2014	2,873
2015	1,100
2016	1,583
2017	1,519
2018	1,426

Source: Policía Nacional Civil; Procuradoría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (PDDH); Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer (ISDEMU)

"No + Femicidios!"
San José, Costa Rica

"Ni Una Menos!"
San José, Costa Rica

"Contra la violencia patriarcal
nuestra alegre rebeldía"
San José, Costa Rica

"No + Niñas Violadas!!"
San José, Costa Rica

"Machismo de derecha =
Machismo izquierda"
University of Costa Rica, San José

Poster Ad Denouncing Sexual Violence
Against Children and Adolescents
Guatemala City, Guatemala

REFERENCES

ACCEDER (2020). Quienes Somos. *Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER (Acciones estratégicas por los Derechos Humanos)*. Retrieved from http://www.acceder.cr

AFI Guatemala (2018). Somos. *Asociación La Familia Importa*. Retrieved from https://afiguatemala.com/somos/

Agarwal, B. (1994). *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Agarwal, B. (1997). 'Bargaining' and gender relations: within and beyond the household. *Feminist Economics*, 3(1): 1–51.

Alonso, A. M. (1995). Rationalizing Patriarchy: Gender, Domestic Violence, and Law in Mexico. *Identities,* 2(1-2): 29–47.

Antonopoulos, R., & Hirway, I. (Ed.) (2010). *Unpaid Work and the Economy: Gender, Time Use and Poverty in Developing Countries*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Araque G., G. M., & Vélez, A. O. (2008). *La Violencia Económica Hacia las Mujeres en El Salvador: Aproximaciones a un Problema Social Invisibilizado*. San Salvador: Progressio.

ARENA (2004). Primero El Salvador. Campaign booklet produced for the 2004 presidential election.

Baldetti, R. (2012, October 3). Vicepresidenta con mujeres líderes. *YouTube*, uploaded by Gobierno de Guatemala. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1OdC8J23GY

Baldetti, R. (2013, February 19). Vicepresidenta con mujeres cooperativistas. *YouTube*, uploaded by Gobierno de Guatemala. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=PA45Qy9ZrVo

Baldetti, R. (2013, August 28). Vicepresidenta Roxana Baldetti con mujeres emprendedoras. *YouTube*, uploaded by Gobierno de Guatemala. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaKfxsvK1fA

Beck, E. (2017). *How Development Projects Persist: Everyday Negotiations with Guatemalan NGOs*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Beetham, G., & Demetriades, J. (2007). Feminist Research Methodologies and Development: Overview and Practical Application. *Gender & Development*, 15(2):199–216.

Bellino, M. (2010). Feminicide and Silence in "Postwar" Guatemala. *Women's Policy Journal of Harvard*, 7(1): 5–10.

Biroli, F., & Caminotti, M. (2020). The Conservative Backlash against Gender in Latin America. *Politics & Gender*, 16(1): 1–6.

Black, G., Jamail, M. H., & Chinchilla, N. S. (1984). *Garrison Guatemala*. London: Zed Books.

Bourdieu, P. (2004). Gender and symbolic violence. In N. Scheper-Hughes, & P. Bourgois (Ed.), *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (pp. 339–342). Maiden, MA: Blackwell.

Bourgois, P. (2001). The Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador. *Ethnography*, 2(1): 5–34.

Bukele, N. (2019, July 15; 11:13 p.m.). Este lunes, El Salvador solo tuvo un homicidio y no está relacionado con pandillas. Fue un feminicidio pasional (definitivamente algo en lo que tenemos que prestar atención). *Twitter*. Retrieved from twitter.com/nayibbukele/status/1151011995535257600?lang=en

Bunch, C. (2004). A Feminist Human Rights Lens. *Peace Review*, 16(1): 29–34.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Consorcio Actoras de Cambio (2006). *Rompiendo el silencio: Justicia para las mujeres víctimas de violencia sexual durante el conflicto armado en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial de Guatemala, Unión Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas, and F&G Editores.

Carcedo, A. (2010). *No Olvidamos ni Aceptamos: Femicidio en Centroamérica 2000-2006*. San José: CEFEMINA.

Carey, D. Jr., & Torres, M. G. (2010). Precursors to Femicide: Guatemalan Women in a Vortex of Violence. *Latin American Research Review*, 45(3): 142–164.

CEFEMINA (2012). *Sobre CEFEMINA*. Retrieved from https://www.cefemina.com/Nueva/index.php/sobre-cefemina/sobre-cefemina

CEH (1999). *Memoria de Silencio*. Vols. 1-12. Guatemala City: Comisión para el Escalaramiento Histórica.

CJA (2018). "Silent Holocaust": The Mayan Genocide. *Center for Justice and Accountability*. Retrieved from https://cja.org/where-we-work/guatemala/

Center for Reproductive Rights (2016). Honduras: Sexual Violence and Total Bans on Emergency Contraception and Abortion. *Derechos de la Mujer*. Retrieved from derechosdelamujer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Honduras-Sexual-violence-and-total-bans-on-emergency-contraception-and-abortion.pdf

Center for Reproductive Rights (2017). *Honduras Reinforces Total Abortion Ban (Press Release)*. Retrieved from reproductiverights.org/press-room/honduras-reinforces-total-abortion-ban

Center for Reproductive Rights (2020a). *El Salvador's Abortion Provisions*. Retrieved from reproductiverights.org/world-abortion-laws/el-salvadors-abortion-provisions

Center for Reproductive Rights (2020b). *Guatemala's Abortion Provisions*. Retrieved from reproductiverights.org/world-abortion-laws/guatemalas-abortion-provisions

Chang, A., Torrez, M. A., Ferguson, K. N., & Sagar, A. (2017). Figured Worlds and American Dreams: An Exploration of Agency and Identity Among Latinx Undocumented Students. *Urban Review*, 49: 189–216.

Chapas Pérez, A. (2019, August 5). ¿Tendremos 'presidenta'?. *Nuestro Diario*, p. 4.

Chavez, S., & Avalos, J. (2014, April 23). The Northern Triangle: The Countries that Don't Cry for their Dead. *Insight Crime*. Retrieved from https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/the-northern-triangle-the-countries-that-dont-cry-for-their-dead/

Ciudad Mujer (2020). *¿Qué es Ciudad Mujer?* Retrieved from http://www.ciudadmujer.gob.sv/que-es-ciudad-mujer/

Ciudad Mujer Honduras (2020). *Estos son los servicios que te ofrecemos en Ciudad Mujer*. Retrieved from https://www.ciudadmujer.gob.hn/servicios/

Cockburn, C. (2004). The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace. In W. Giles, & J. Hyndman (Ed.), *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones* (pp. 24–44). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Coddington, K. (2017). Voice Under Scrutiny: Feminist Methods, Anticolonial Responses, and New Methodological Tools. *The Professional Geographer*, 69(2): 314–320.

CODEFEM (2020). ¿Quiénes Somos? *Colectiva para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres en Guatemala*. Retrieved from http://codefem.org/wp/nosotras/quienes-somos/

Connelly, M. P., Li, T. M., MacDonald, M., & Parpart, J. L. (2000). Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives. In J. L. Parpart, M. P. Connelly, & V. E. Barriteau (Ed.), *Theoretical Perspective on Gender and Development* (pp. 51–160). Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Cookson, T. P. (2018). Rural Women Walking and Waiting. In *Unjust Conditions: Women's Work and the Hidden Cost of Cash Transfer Programs* (pp. 76–96). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6): 1241–1299.

Das, V. (2007). *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

De los Reyes, I. (2013, March 8). 'El país donde ser mujer se paga con la muerte.' *BBC Online*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2013/03/121102_femicidio_feminicidio_salvador.shtml

Deere, C. D., Contreras, J., & Twyman, J. (2014). Patrimonial Violence: A Study of Women's Property Rights in Ecuador. *Latin American Perspectives*, 41(1): 143–165.

Deere, C. D., & León, M. (2001). *Empowering Women: Land and Property Rights in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

EFE (2019, February 13). Presentan en Honduras la iniciativa "Spotlight" para acabar con los feminicidios. *Agencia EFE*. Retrieved from https://www.efe.com/efe/america/portada/presentan-en-honduras-la-iniciativa-spotlight-para-acabar-con-los-feminicidios/20000064-3897088

Ertürk, Y. (2009). *15 Years of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences (1994-2009) - A Critical Review*. Geneva: UN Human Rights Council.

Farmer, P. (2004). An Anthropology of Structural Violence. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3): 305–325.

Federici, S. (2004). *Caliban and the Witch*. New York, NY: Autonomedia.

FERH [Feministas en Resistencia Honduras]. (2009, November 25). *Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres después del Golpe de Estado en Honduras*. Presentation, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Fiske, A. P. (1991). *Structures of Social Life: The Four Elementary Forms of Human Relations*. New York, NY: Free Press.

FLACSO-Guatemala (2020). Sede Académica Guatemala. *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*. Retrieved from https://www.flacso.edu.gt/?page_id=30

Foro de Mujeres por la Vida (2018). *Feminicidios: Monitoreo de Fuentes Oficiales y Medios de Comunicación Escrita desde enero hasta agosto del 2018*. Tegucigalpa: Foro de Mujeres por la Vida.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Frederickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). Objectification Theory: Toward Understanding Women's Lived Experiences and Mental Health Risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21(2): 173–206.

Fregoso, R. L., & Bejarano, C. L. (2010). A Cartography of Feminicide in the Américas. In R. L. Fregoso, & C. L. Bejarano (Eds.), *Terrorizing Women: Feminicide in the Américas* (pp. 1–42). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Freidenberg, F. (2019). *Women's Political Representation in Honduras: A Comparative Perspective on Party Resistance and Inclusive Reform Proposals* (Policy Brief). Atlanta, GA: The Carter Center.

Front Line Defenders (2018). *Case History: Berta Cáceres*. Retrieved from https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/case-history-berta-cáceres

Fulchirone, A., Paz, O. A., & López, A. (2011). *Tejidos que Lleva el Alma: Memoria de las Mujeres Mayas Sobrevivientes de Violación Sexual Durante el Conflicto Armado* (2nd ed.). Guatemala City: Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial, Unión Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas.

Fundación Sobrevivientes (2020). *Que hacemos*. Retrieved from http://sobrevivientes.org/sobre-nosotros/

Funes, M., & Pignato, V. (2012, September 30). Presidente Funes y Secretaria Pignato inauguran Ciudad Mujer Usulután. *YouTube*, uploaded by Presidencia de la República de El Salvador. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgkK1u7y2Fk

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3): 167–191.

Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3): 291–305.

Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2015). Lethal Violence against Women and Girls. In *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, J. (2007). *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gervais, C. (2010). From Discovery to Dissidence: Honduran Women's Conceptions and Claims of Human Rights. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 11(4): 19–36.

Gervais, C., & Estévez, B. (2011). Security through Solidarity: Honduran Women's Post-Coup Strategies of Support and Survival. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 12(4): 1–21.

GGM (2020). Quiénes Somos. *Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres*. Retrieved from http://ggm.org.gt/quienes-somos/

Giles, W., & Hyndman, J. (2004). Introduction. In W. Giles, & J. Hyndman (Ed.), *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gobierno de Guatemala (2020). Mejoramiento de las Condiciones Socioeconómicas de la Mujer. *Secretaría de Obras Sociales de la Esposa del Presidente*. Retrieved from http://www.sosep.gob.gt/?page_id=408

Goett, J. (2017). Sexual Violence and Autonomous Politics. In *Black Autonomy: Race, Gender, and Afro-Nicaraguan Activism* (pp. 151–177). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Griffin, J. (2018, June 6). 'Police never turned up': El Salvador's devastating epidemic of femicide. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/jun/06/el-salvador-devastating-epidemic-femicide

Guardado, S. (2014, December 5). Retrospectiva del Delito de Aborto en la Legislación Salvadoreña: II parte. *Enfoque Jurídico*. Retrieved from https://enfoquejuridico.org/2014/12/05/retrospectiva-del-delito-de-aborto-en-la-legislacion-salvadorena-ii-parte/

Hammar, L. (1999). Caught Between Structure and Agency: The Gender of Violence and Prostitution in Papua New Guinea. *Transforming Anthropology*, 8(1-2): 77–96.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3): 575–599.

Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hardin, M. (2002). Altering Masculinities: The Spanish Conquest and the Evolution of the Latin American *Machismo*. *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 7(1): 1–22.

Hernández, J. O. (2018, August 17). Reunion sobre violencia contra la mujer. *YouTube*, uploaded by Casa Presidencial Honduras. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBHJq6tR36E

Hernández, J. O. (2018, November 22). Inauguración Ciudad Mujer en SPS. *YouTube*, uploaded by Casa Presidencial Honduras. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9Yex3qVJuY

Hernández, J. O. (2018, December 6). Mujeres en la Construcción 06-12-2018. *YouTube*, uploaded by Casa Presidencial Honduras. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOlxrFZKLdc

Hernández, J. O. (2019, February 13). Discurso del Presidente en Iniciativa Spotlight. *YouTube*, uploaded by Casa Presidencial Honduras. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFo6-8ga_GA

Hernández, J. O. (2019, July 17). Inauguración Ciudad Mujer La Ceiba 17-07-2019. *YouTube*, uploaded by Casa Presidencial Honduras. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmDR3CdNmXE

Hoare, J. (2007). Editorial. *Gender & Development*, 15(2): 177–186.

Howard, L. M. (2008). *United Nations Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Hume, M. (2008). The Myths of Violence: Gender, Conflict, and Community in El Salvador. *Latin American Perspectives*, 35(5): 59–76.

IWGIA (2019). Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala. *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs*. Retrieved from https://www.iwgia.org/en/guatemala.html

Katz, E. (1991). Breaking the myth of harmony: theoretical and methodological guidelines to the study of rural Third World households. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 23 (3-4): 37–56.

Kelly, L. (1987). The Continuum of Sexual Violence. In J. Homes, & M. Manard (Ed.), *Women, Violence, and Social Control*. London: Macmillan.

Kennedy, M. (2005, April 11). *The Feminisation of Poverty, and the Impact of Globalisation on Women*. Presentation, School for Policy Studies at University of Bristol.

Kinosian, S. (2015). Honduras' Military: On the Streets and in the Government. *Latin America Working Group*. Retrieved from www.lawg.org/honduras-military-on-the-streets-and-in-the-government

Lagarde, M. (2006). Del Femicidio al Feminicidio. *Desde el Jardín de Freud. Revista de Psicoanálisis* 6: 216–225.

Lagarde, M. (2008). Antropología, feminismo y política: violencia feminicida y derechos humanos de las mujeres. In M. Bullen, & M. C. Díez (Coord.), *Retos teóricos y nuevas prácticas. XI Congreso de Antropología* (pp. 209–239). San Sebastían: Ankulegi.

Landau, S. (1993). *The Guerilla Wars of Central America—Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Llewelyn, S. (2007). A Neutral Feminist Observer? Observation-based Research and the Politics of Feminist Knowledge Making. *Gender & Development*, 15(2): 299–310.

MacKinnon, C. A. (2007). Human Rights and Global Violence Against Women. In *Are Women Human? and Other International Dialogues* (pp. 28–33). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Madison, D. S. (2005). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics and performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Marroquin de Morales, H. P. (2016, March 31). Iniciativa privada apoya a mujeres del programa Creciendo Seguro. *YouTube*, uploaded by Gobierno de Guatemala. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3l9GOVDm5U

Martín-Baró, I. (2016). Imagenes sociales en El Salvador. In M. Gaborit, & A. Blanco (Eds.), *El realismo crítico: fundamentos y aplicaciones*. San Salvador: UCA Editores.

McAnarney, A. (2012, November 15). Femicide in Central America: Is Creating Female-Friendly Urban Zones really the Solution? *OpenDemocracy*. Retrieved from https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opensecurity/femicide-in-central-america-is-creating-female-friendly-urban-zones-real/

McCombes, S. (2019, September 19). Understanding different sampling methods. *Scribbr*. Retrieved from https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/sampling-methods/

Méndez Gutiérrez, L. (2013). *La Erradicación de la Violencia Contra las Mujeres y el Papel de la Policía Nacional Civil*. Guatemala City: F&G Editores and Foro de Mujeres y Desarrollo.

Menjívar, C., & Bejarano, C. (2004). Latino immigrants' perceptions of crime and of police authorities: A case study from the Phoenix metropolitan area. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27(1): 120–148.

Menjívar, C. (2008). Violence and Women's Lives in Eastern Guatemala: A Conceptual Framework. *Latin American Research Review*, 43(3): 109–136.

Menjívar, C. (2011). *Enduring Violence: Ladina Women's Lives in Guatemala*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Menjívar, C., and Abrego, L. J. (2012). Legal Violence: Immigration Law and the Lives of Central American Immigrants. *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(5): 1380–1421.

Menjívar, C., & Walsh, S. D. (2017). The Architecture of Feminicide: The State, Inequalities, and Everyday Gender Violence in Honduras. *Latin American Research Review*, 52(2): 221–240.

Menjívar, C. (2018, December 3). The Central American "Caravan" as a Political Act. *Mobilizing Ideas*. Retrieved from https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2018/12/03/the-central-american-caravan-as-a-political-act/

Merry, S. E. (2009). Introduction. In S.E. Merry (Ed.), *Gender Violence: A Cultural Perspective* (pp. 1–24). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Molyneux, M. (1985). Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua. *Feminist Studies*, 11(2): 227–254.

Morales, J. (2016, November 12). Presidente Morales: No estoy a favor del aborto. *YouTube*, uploaded by Gobierno de Guatemala. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGWQZ4oDeKY

Moser, C. O. N. (2001). The Gendered Continuum of Violence and Conflict. In C.O.N. Moser, & F. Clark (Ed.), *Victims, Perpetrators, or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict, and Political Violence* (pp. 30–51). London: Zed Books.

MSM (2020). Quiénes Somos: Credibilidad, Confianza y Prestigio. *Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres*. Retrieved from https://mujeresmsm.org/quienes-somos/

Musalo, K., & Bookey, B. (2014). Crimes without Punishment: An Update on Violence Against Women and Impunity in Guatemala. *Social Justice*, 40(4): 106–117.

The New York Times (1986, August 23). Honduras Rejects U.S. Plan for G.I.'s to Train Contras. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/1986/08/23/world/honduras-rejects-us-plan-for-gi-s-to-train-contras.html

North, L. L. (1982). El Salvador: The Historical Roots of the Civil War. *Studies in Political Economy*: 59–87.

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist Research* (pp. 30–61). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

OAS (2019). Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women. *Organization of American States*. Retrieved from https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html

ORMUSA (2019). Indicadores de Violencia. *Observatorio de la Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres*. Retrieved from http://observatoriodeviolencia.ormusa.org/index.php

OSAR (2020). ¿Quiénes Somos? *Observatorio en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva*. Retrieved from https://osarguatemala.org/quienes-somos/

Peterson, A. L., & Peterson, B. G. (2008). Martyrdom, Sacrifice, and Political Memory in El Salvador. *Social Research*, 75(2): 511–542.

Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life Project (2010a). Guatemala. *Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project*. Retrieved from http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/guatemala#/?affiliations_religion_id=11&affiliations_year=2010&region_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2016

Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life Project (2010b). El Salvador. *Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project*. Retrieved from www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/el-salvador/#/?affiliations_religion_id=11&affiliations_year=2010&region_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2016

Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life Project (2010c). Honduras. *Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project*. Retrieved from www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/honduras#/?affiliations_religion_id=11&affiliations_year=2010&region_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2016

Pignato, V. (2011, December 5). Foro Debate 'La Violencia que se Invisibiliza'. *YouTube*, uploaded by Presidencia de la República de El Salvador. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=3emN_L0_nbI

Pignato, V. (2012, June 18). Secretaria Pignato impulsa estrategia de prevención de violencia contra las mujeres. *YouTube*, uploaded by Presidencia de la República de El Salvador. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVam9pmMl3w

Pignato, V. (2012, June 19). Participación de la Secretaria Pignato en Foro de Líderes sobre el Futuro de las Mujeres. *YouTube*, uploaded by Presidencia de la República de El Salvador. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRFWXvs-6KM

Poder Judicial de Honduras (2008). 'Decreto 144-83'- Código Penal. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*. Retrieved from www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=5491a40b4

Prieto-Carrón, M., Thomson, M., & Macdonald, M. (2007). No More Killings! Women Respond to Femicides in Central America. *Gender & Development*, 15(1): 25–40.

Radford, J., & Russell, D. E. H. (Eds.) (1992). *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing*. New York, NY: Twayne.

Ramisetty, A., & Muriu, M. (2013). "When does the End Begin?" Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Post-Conflict Societies: Case Studies from Zimbabwe and El Salvador. *Gender & Development*, 21(3): 489–503.

Razack, S. H. (2000). Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 15(2): 91–130.

República de Guatemala (1963). *Código Civil*. Guatemala City: Organization of American States. Retrieved from https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/Codigo_Civil_Guatemala.pdf

República de Guatemala (1973). *Código Penal.* Guatemala City: Organization of American States. Retrieved from https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/Codigo_Penal_Guatemala.pdf

República de Guatemala (1996). *Ley para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia Intrafamiliar*. Guatemala City: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://www.sipi.siteal.iipe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sipi_normativa/guatemala_decreto_nro_97_1996.pdf

República de Guatemala (1999). *Ley de Dignificación y Promoción de la Mujer*. Guatemala City: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://www.sipi.siteal.iipe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sipi_normativa/decreto_7-99_ley_de_dignificacion_de_la_mujer_-_guatemala.pdf

República de Guatemala (2008). *Ley Contra el Femicidio y otras Formas de Violencia Contra la Mujer*. Guatemala City: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://www.sipi.siteal.iipe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sipi_normativa/decreto_ndeg_22_de_2008_-ley_contra_el_femicidio_y_otras_formas_de_violencia_contra_la_mujer_-_guatemala.pdf

República de Guatemala (2009). *Ley Contra la Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas*. Guatemala City: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://www.sipi.siteal.iipe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sipi_normativa/ley-contra-la-violencia-sexual-explotacion-y-trata-de-personas_-_decreto_9-2009_-guatemala.pdf

República de Honduras (1983). *Código Penal*. Tegucigalpa: Poder Judicial de Honduras. Retrieved from http://www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/CEDIJ/Leyes/Documents/CodigoPenal-ReformaIncluida.pdf

República de Honduras (1997). *Ley Contra la Violencia Doméstica*. Tegucigalpa: Poder Judicial de Honduras. Retrieved from http://www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/CEDIJ/Documents/Ley%20contra%20la%20Violencia%20Domestica.pdf

República de Honduras (2000). *Ley de Igualdad de Oportunidades para la Mujer*. Tegucigalpa: Instituto Nacional de la Mujer. Retrieved from https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Parties/Honduras/Leyes/LeyMujer.pdf

República de El Salvador (1996). *Ley Contra la Violencia Intrafamiliar*. San Salvador: Asamblea Legislativa. Retrieved from https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/5ED0C9E5-8F5A-4874-86FB-982E412E4C44.pdf

República de El Salvador (2011a). *Ley Especial Integral para una Vida Libre de Violencia para las Mujeres*. San Salvador: Observatorio de Igualdad de Género de América Latina y el Caribe. Retrieved from https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/2011_decreto520_elsvd.pdf

República de El Salvador (2011b). *Ley de Igualdad, Equidad y Erradicación de la Discriminación Contra las Mujeres*. San Salvador: Asamblea Legislativa. Retrieved from https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/EB6D9D32-0AC3-48D7-9667-41E527359CCF.pdf

Ronderos, K. (2011). Poverty Reduction, Political Violence and Women's Rights in Honduras. *Community Development Journal*, 46(3): 315–326.

Rosser, B. J. (1995). *The Effects of United States Intervention in Latin America: A Comparative Analysis of Political Instability, 1958-1988* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database.

Russell, D. E. H., & Harmes, R. A. (Eds.) (2001). *Femicide in Global Perspective*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Sánchez Cerén, S. (2016, March 30). Mensaje a la nación (Salvador Sánchez Cerén). *YouTube*, uploaded by Presidencia de la República de El Salvador. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FFvQHjzTHI

Sánchez Cerén, S. (2018, September 26). Discurso de Salvador Sánchez Cerén, Presidente de El Salvador, 73ª Asamblea General de la ONU. *Noticias de América Latina y el Caribe (NODAL)*. Retrieved from www.nodal.am/2018/09/discurso-de-salvador-sanchez-ceren-presidente-de-el-salvador-73a-asamblea-general-de-la-onu/

Sanford, V. (2003). *Violencia y Genocidio en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: F&G Editores.

Sanford, V. (2008). From Genocide to Feminicide: Impunity and Human Rights in Twenty-First Century Guatemala. *Journal of Human Rights*, 7(2): 104–122.

Sanford, V., Álvarez-Arenas, S. D., & Dill, K. (2016). Sexual Violence as a Weapon during the Guatemalan Genocide. In V. Sanford, K. Stefanos, & C. M. Salvi (Eds.), *Gender Violence in Peace and War: States of Complicity* (pp. 34–46). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Santos, F. M., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (2004). Multiple Case Study. In M.S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. Futing Liao (Eds.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Schmidt, L. A., & Buechler, S. (2017). "I risk everything because I have already lost everything": Central American Female Migrants Speak Out on the Migrant Trail in Oaxaca, Mexico." *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 16(1): 139–164.

Segato, R. L. (2014). Las Nuevas Formas de la Guerra y el Cuerpo de las Mujeres. *Sociedade e Estado*, 29(2): 341–371.

Sev'er, A. (1999). Exploring The Continuum: Sexualized Violence by Men and Male Youth Against Women and Girls. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, 24(1): 95–104.

Shantikumar, S. (2018). Methods of Sampling from a Population. *Health Knowledge*. Retrieved from https://www.healthknowledge.org.uk/public-health-textbook/research-methods/1a-epidemiology/methods-of-sampling-population

Sokoloff, N. J., & Dupont, I. (2005). Domestic Violence at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender: Challenges and Contributions to Understanding Violence Against Marginalized Women in Diverse Communities. *Violence Against Women*, 11(1): 38–64.

Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992). *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Scheper-Hughes, N. (1996). Small Wars and Invisible Genocides. *Social Science and Medicine*, 43(5): 889–900.

Speed, S. (2014). A Dreadful Mosaic: Rethinking Gender Violence through the Lives of Indigenous Women Migrants. *Gendered Perspectives on International Development, Special Issue: Anthropological Approaches to Gender-Based Violence and Human Rights*, 304: 1–16.

Speed, S. (2016). States of Violence: Indigenous Women Migrants in the Era of Neoliberal Multicriminalism. *Critique of Anthropology*, 0(0): 1–22.

Speed, S. (2019). *Incarcerated Stories: Indigenous Women Migrants and Violence in the Settler-Capitalist State*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Spotlight Initiative (2020). *What we do*. Retrieved from http:/.www.spotlightinitiative.org/what-we-do

Stephen, L. (1995). Women's Rights Are Human Rights: The Merging of Feminine and Feminist Interests among El Salvador's Mothers of the Disappeared (CO-MADRES). *American Ethnologist*, 22(4): 807–827.

Stevens, E. P. (1973). *Marianismo: The Other Face of Machismo in Latin America*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Stewart, I. (2009). History. In *The Rough Guide to Guatemala* (4th ed., pp. 391–414). New York, NY: Rough Guides.

Toledo Vásquez, P. (2009). *Feminicidio*. Mexico City: Oficina en México del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos.

UN Women (2019). Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). *United Nations*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm

UN Women (2020). Reservations to CEDAW. *United Nations*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations.htm

Velasco, N. J. (2008). The Guatemalan Femicide: An Epidemic of Impunity. *Law and Business Review of the Americas*, 14(2): 397–423.

Velásquez Nimatuj, I. A. (2016). *Struggle and Obstacles for Indigenous Women's Fight for Justice in Guatemala*. Presentation, University of Texas at Austin.

Villanueva, R. (2019). *Testimonies of Indigenous Female Survivors of the Guatemalan Genocide*. Yahad In-Unum. Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust. Los Angeles, CA.

Viterna, J. (2012). The left and "life": The politics of abortion in El Salvador. *Politics and Gender*, 8(2): 248–254.

Vonderlack-Navarro, R. (2010). Targeting Women Versus Addressing Gender in Microcredit: Lessons from Honduras. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 25(2): 123–134.

Walsh, S. D., & Menjívar, C. (2016a). Impunity and Multisided Violence in the Lives of Latin American Women: El Salvador in Comparative Perspective. *Current Sociology Monograph*, 64(4): 586–602.

Walsh, S. D., & Menjívar, C. (2016b). "What Guarantees Do We Have?" Legal Tolls and Persistent Impunity for Feminicide in Guatemala. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 58(4): 31–55.

WOLA (2006). Claudina Isabel Velásquez Paiz. *Washington Office on Latin America.* Retrieved from https://www.wola.org/analysis/claudina-isabel-velasquez-paiz/

Wright, M. W. (2006). *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Wolf, S. (2017). *Mano Dura: The Politics of Gang Control in El Salvador*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Zulver, J. (2016). High-Risk Feminism in El Salvador: Women's Mobilisation in Violent Times. *Gender & Development*, 24(2): 171–185.

Zunes, S. (2014, March 14). The US role in the Honduras coup and subsequent violence. *National Catholic Reporter*. Retrieved from https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/us-role-honduras-coup-and-subsequent-violence